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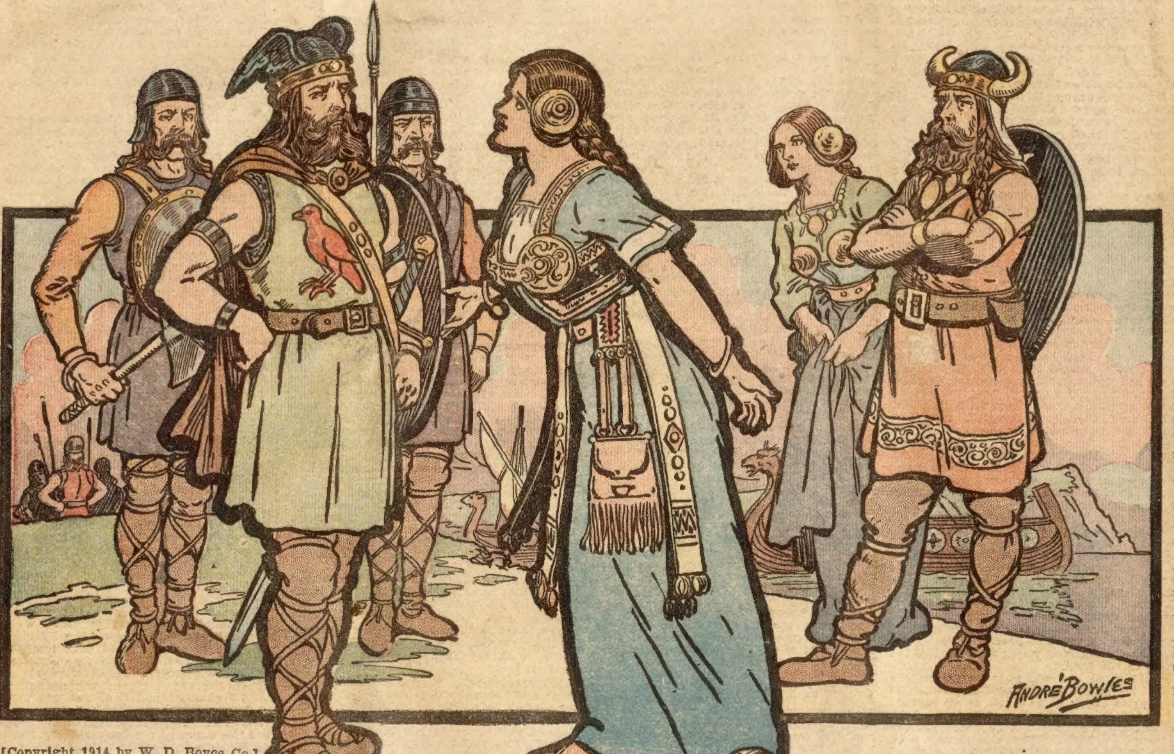
LEIF THE BOLD

Or, FIRST IN AMERICA

By WILLIAM H. MANNING



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CHAPTER I.

THE UNBENT KNEE.

THE sea breeze drifted in landward and, on the little rise of land, lifted the web of the flag, flinging it out in brave, curling folds that ever changed. The banner was a white field, with the figure of a raven worked deftly upon it in red. It was, as far as known, the first flag that had ever waved in the land later known as America, but then, in the year 1000, a nameless and unknown tract.

Under the banner stood a group of men, strong of body and face, but carrying litheness with muscle grandly—men stern of expression, clad in armor, and bearing swords, shields, spears and battle-axes like the hardy warriors they were.

Four hundred feet from where they stood a strange vessel lay lifting in the sun, while farther away, beyond a sand-spit that was like a tongue, a second ship was moving their way, having just turned a headland in the offing.

All the men were looking at the farther craft, their brows drawn together, their eyes hard, their lips straight lines behind their heavy beards. These were unfriendly faces, yet no man moved. The outer ship, having rounded the point, drew nearer the fluttering flag. Suddenly one of their number broke the silence.

"I like it not, Leif Erikson!" he exclaimed. "If I had my way Regnar, the Bear, should go to the bottom of the sea, not to this shore. He is an ambitious man, and if he lives to return to Norseland it would be like him to claim that he, not you, discovered this continent."

"Be calm, Thorkel," was the even reply. "I hold Regnar in the hollow of my hand."

"He knows how to fight."

"But he has daughters."

An intemperate answer seemed trembling on Thorkel's lips, but his mood suddenly changed and he laughed heartily.

"By the spear of Odin! there is meat in that!" he agreed. "The fair Thora and Inger are there, and Regnar loves his own. Ay, Leif, you hold them all in the hollow of your hand while the maidens nestle in their father's bosom. We count more men than they, and Regnar has his sting drawn. The man is soft where his daughters are concerned. And you—ay, you, Leif?"

The leader held out his hand and slowly closed and unclosed it.

"That which lies easy in its hollow is safe," he explained, "but if the hand shuts tight—thus!" and he snapped the twig he held.

Again Thorkel laughed, but they were interrupted by the murmur of voices behind them. They turned and saw three of their number approaching with quick steps.

"So," said Thorkel, "they are back from the heights. It is well that we have their report ere the Bear Viking comes to land. Well, fellows, what have you seen from the high place?"

The newcomers did not glance at him, but, acting in unison, flung themselves on their knees at the feet of his companion. Two bowed humble heads, but the third held up his face and looked in enthusiastic respect. Then speech passed his lips in smooth utterance.

"Hail, Leif, son of Eric, the Red, Chosen of the Norsemen, master of the seas, glory of the remote spots, Earl of a new world! A continent is under thy foot, and the name of it is Leif's Land!"

"Hail, hail!" repeated his two fellows.

Leif gazed at them unmoved. His cheek was untinged with red at the flattery, his manner untouched by pride.

"Saw you no other men?" he asked calmly.

"None, my Earl. From that lofty place we beheld land to the west, the south, and the north, but no man, and we saw no work of men. Even as Ask and Embla were the first man and the first woman in the world, so you are the first man in this continent, and we proclaim you Earl."

"Does the land seem good?" asked Leif, unmoved.

"Fair as any spot in the Norse country. You have caught up from the maw of the unknown distance a rich prize, and you are its sole master."

"Peace, man! When I sent the three to the heights I said to Biorn that I would make Sigurd, the Skald, of the number, as he had a tongue. Sirrah, give me no fine speeches now, neither poems, but plain and manly talk. What saw you?"

"My Earl, fertile land, strong turf, hardy trees, wide reaches with none to oppose, and fields waiting for the master's nod."

"And no man?"

"None."

Leif hesitated for a moment only, then he laid a hand upon the staff of the banner and planted his spear in the earth.

"I repeat what I have said before," he declared. "I take possession of the new world in the name of the Norsemen who sailed hence in the ship Sea Rider. Ay, it is ours, and what we have, we will keep!"

The twenty men around him broke into a shout.

"Hail, Earl Leif, ruler of Leif's Land!"

Swords, battle-axes and spears were waved on high, and as their holders clashed them together the din of battering metal added to the peal of other, repeated shouts. At a motion from the leader, who liked the individual references to himself but little, the noise suddenly subsided.

"Who, now," he asked, "shall say that no land lies beyond the seas? We have crossed, and we have found. It is my thought, like yours, that no man ever trod these shores before."

"And," insisted Sigurd, "you are Earl of all——"

"Peace! No more of idle flattery."

The speaker wheeled and looked seaward. Sent by a favoring breeze, the outer ship was now nearing the end of the sand-spit. The canvas bellied bravely, and below it stood men as hardy as Leif himself. Yes, and more was there, for women's garments fluttered in the group.

It was not a fair and easy harbor. Before the first ship had ventured in, a boat had been sent to study the way, and, later, one of the first crew had been dispatched to navigate the second vessel, for it would have been easy to go aground with a little rashness.

Even as it was, some of those on deck looked with uneasiness. They saw blue water under their keel, but on either side were green reaches that told of water so shallow that even their favorably built crafts could not find drawing-way that was safe. When they had finally come fully from the headland to the anchorage they realized that they had followed a course so tortuous that it was almost a blue path of safety like a letter S, with the treacherous green beyond.

It was the narrow way to the threshold of the New World.

Safely piloted, they turned the end of the sand-spit and started on the last leg of their journey in the harbor. Leif Erikson grew thoughtful, and then walked toward the water, followed by Biorn, Thorkel, and other warriors.

Leif, a native of the country now called Norway, had left Greenland, which his father, Eric, the Red, had settled, on a voyage of discovery in his ship the Sea Rider, carrying a crew of forty-five men. Some time previously another sea-captain, Biarne Heriulfson, had reported that, being blown from his course by adverse winds, he had sighted an unknown land on his larboard bow.

It was to investigate this rumor that the Sea Rider was started across seas.

Two days' sail from land they had come upon another ship, the Strong Cub, dismasted, short of hands and in sore distress, stricken by violent squalls. Finding that the captain was one Regnar, for whom Leif had no good will, the Strong Cub would have been left to her fate had not women been aboard. Out of humanity, Leif stepped new masts for them and took them along with him, but as harsh feelings prevailed, more as prisoners than anything else.

The two vessels had fetched to land, but the half-crippled Cub was lagging, and Leif and his men had been an hour ashore when their consort threaded the final stretch of the tortuous channel around the sand-spit.

Now they were to meet again, for Leif had his plans, but in a spirit as unfriendly as before.

The newly proclaimed Earl gave orders to Thorkel, who shouted to the prize crew in the Strong Cub, and the order was simple.

"Drop anchor, and let every man and woman come ashore!"

It was done as said. The anchor was presently let go, and boats conveyed the strangely assorted party in the ill-fated ship to the land.

Leif stood a dozen rods away, watching. He saw his own hands, the men of the prize crew; he saw the other captain and his few remaining sailors, and he saw the four women who gave variety strange enough for that unknown world. The Earl's brow was darkly bent, a scowl being for Regnar, the Bear, and there was no lessening of the frown when the women were surveyed.

Yet, of their number three were young, and two fair as the flowers that nodded on the slope.

"Bid the Viking come hither!" Leif curtly commanded.

He spoke to a thrall, and the man went with the message. Then he who was summoned came with slow and dignified step.

Regnar, the Bear, was of the same blood as Leif and his men, but where there should have been friendship the whim of Leif had set a boundary and decreed unfriendship, if not actual hostility. Thus the Bear knew, and knew further that he was in Leif's power, and that tragedy might come of that boundary, yet his step was firm and his face unclouded as he advanced.

It was not in his bold nature to tremble at the frown of any man. Although of middle age, fortune had dealt kindly with him, and he had the same strong face, powerful body and muscular limbs that made his captors such wonders among the sons of men. And, walking deliberately but firmly, he neared Leif with his face unclouded.

He paused a few feet away, standing at wait, calm and forceful.

"Fellow!" thundered Thorkel, "uncover your head in the presence of thy better and thy master. Ay, uncover and kneel to Earl Leif!"

The eyes of Regnar, the Bear, turned slowly upon his insulter, but there was neither fear nor hesitation in their depths.

"Sir," he replied, "I kneel to no man!"

"You shall do it now!" shouted the enraged warrior. "You snall not slight the majesty of a better man. Down, slave——"

He moved forward, his hand outstretched to enforce the order, but Leif spoke evenly.

"Stop, Thorkel! Who gave you authority to say such rash words? I ask no man to kneel in my presence in this new land. Give way! Regnar, hold the position that God intended for you."

"By Odin and Thor!" muttered Thorkel, amazed.

Now, the words of Leif had been low-pitched and did not carry far, but the bellow of the lesser warrior had flung afar and reached ears near which was no armor or heavy weapon. A girl came flying with swift feet, and she confronted Leif with bitter face and sparkling eyes.

"No!" she cried feverishly, "my father shall not kneel to you. His blood is as good as yours, and his knee shall not be bent in shame while I live. Think twice, Leif Erikson, lest you do what will cost you ill!"

CHAPTER II:

THE YOUNG OF THE BEAR.

IT WAS Thora, daughter of Regnar, and when her sister Inger had joined her, equally determined, the two children of the Viking were there—there with hostile faces and flashing eyes, with defiant and resolute spirit, and with what Thorkel considered shocking rebellion.

But what a picture! In that day no Norse woman was strictly slender, but while the other two females, lingering at the waterside, had marked breadth of shoulder and heavy figures throughout, these children of the Bear were slight for their generation—slight, yet full of life, muscle and strength, models of health, and lithe and graceful as the panther.

Their faces—just then they seemed like beauty turned to fire, for indignation burned within them.

"Stay!" spoke Regnar calmly. "Be at peace, my daughter. It was not Leif who bade me kneel, and he now says it shall not be done."

The sisters turned their eyes upon Leif, the Bold. Already their faces were softening, but they mentally demanded that his own lips or their eyes should give them certain evidence before they abated their hostility.

He remained still, eying them, but wholly inscrutable. Nor smile nor frown, nor friendly interest nor reproof disturbed the complete repose of his powerful face.

"It is so," he said quietly. "No one will kneel."

Thora flushed a little. It was ill that she should condemn a man who deserved no condemnation, and injudicious that she should anger one who held her father's fate in his hands.

"Sir," she said, almost humbly, "I beg your pardon for my haste, but I heard the word of one who declared my father should kneel."

"Ay," admitted Leif, with impassive tolerance, "the word of good Thorkel, whose tongue is oftentimes longer than his head, but who has the heart of an ox. He speaks hotly, and afterwards thinks coolly."

In this speech there appeared no desire to appease the girl, nor to quiet her fears. Some of his men gazed and were thrilled at sight of such loveliness, but Leif was unmoved, and temperate without being cold. He turned to the father.

"Bear Viking," he added, "I have sent for you to make a certain matter plain. When we were at sea you asked me, after I had stepped the new masts for you and made your ship fit for sailing, what I was going to do with you."

"I did," Regnar replied.

"You shall hear all that I now know. The remote future is as little known to me as to you, but, for now, you stay where you are."

"Although I have lost so many of my crew, I still have enough to navigate the Strong Cub to my native fjord."

"It may not be. You stay."

"As prisoners?"

I am no learned man to define words, and not always decisions. I have said that you stay."

"Sir," interrupted Thora, "pray remember that women are here, women who will hamper your adventures, and who are ill-fitted for rough life. We beseech you, let us go home to Norseland."

"I have sailors enough to repair my ship," pursued Regnar persuasively, "and I ask neither labor nor skill from your men. Only the wood we can cleave from the trees hereabouts. If we go we shall be no drain on your resources of food, fuel or clothing."

"By Odin and Thor!" cried the boisterous Thorkel, "Regnar would go hastily back to claim, ere you return, that it was he who discovered this new land. Ay, he would have his name writ in Saga, Edda and on Runic stones."

Leif turned abruptly upon his follower. For once his calm was disturbed, for the words had exactly expressed his thought. He did not intend that the Bear Viking should lay claim to what honor was his, but he had aspired to keep his ideas secret, and Thorkel had arrived at like thoughts and blazoned them abroad.

The master spoke no word, but as his man caught his look he moved back a pace, suddenly ill at ease.

"Sir," said Regnar hurriedly, "I will never make such a claim. It is nothing to me who has discovered this land. All I ask is that I be permitted to take my daughters back to their home nigh the Hardanger fjord."

"You will remain here," pronounced Leif, without emotion. "Yes, and keep close to this town, which I have named Leifhome."

"But," persisted Thora, "we maidens and old Gunhild are not strong like the massive men here, and we cannot endure hardship like them."

"Where comes in the hardship of sitting idle on this slope while slaves wait upon you?" asked Leif pointedly.

"Still," urged Inger, "we greatly desire to go back to the Hardanger fjord. Our home is there, and there our hearts. Be merciful! We are of your own race, and our father a sea-captain like you."

For the first time resentment flashed into the Earl's face. Something like passion was in his expression, and his eyes sparkled.

"Make no claims upon me. Who is Regnar, the Bear? A Viking who has held to piratical pursuits when nearly all others have reformed their ways and adopted peaceful lives. Ay, and does he not cling to the heathen worship of Odin and Thor, when wise men have adopted Christianity?"

"It is known to me," said the Bear Viking, "that you have introduced the new religion into Greenland, but I hold to that of my fathers. To me, Odin and Thor are the only gods, even as they were to my ancestors. I grant to all men that they have their religion of choice, but pray allow me to have mine."

Like the Earl, Regnar was stirred to anger now, for his captor had touched upon the thing nearest to the heart of man. Good men and evil alike grow intemperate when their inherited religion is spoken of slightingly.

Yet the Viking quickly controlled himself.

"For the other matter, I plead not so. In ages past Vikings were certainly pirates, but it is thus with but few now, and certainly not with me. I am a warrior of the sea, but I have molested no feeble ship crew, and fougnt only mine enemies."

"Others sav different," coldly returned Leif. "Let that pass, for neither of us will take the word of the other."

Thora stole to the side of the Earl and clasped her hand on his great arm.

"I pray you, sir, let us maidens go home, with my father and his ship to bear us."

It was a soft, persuasive voice she used, and her upturned eyes met the master's gaze as softly as those of a fawn. She was using her womanly arts to save herself and those of her blood.

Leif Erikson looked, wondered, felt new emotions, an was oddly stirred. The gentle voice and the mild eyes touched him secretly, and had he been in Norseland he would have thrown off all reserve and bade her go free. But no such words passed his lips now. Not for a moment did he waver.

"It may not be," he replied, after the slightest possible delay. "Regnar may be pirate and heathen, but the doctrines of Christianity do not teach murder or harshness. Enough of words! You stay!"

He turned again to Regnar.

"Shelter shall be made here for you and your daughters, and in these huts you will stay unless storms make it necessary for the maidens to seek cover in your ship. If, however, they go there, an armed guard will be beside you. Your ship does not leave here secretly."

Making a gesture of dismissal, he swung about until his back was to the Bear Viking and his daughters.

"Biorn and Thorkel," he added, "come with me. There is need for consultation."

The three walked away, and father and girls looked gloomily at each other. Before they could speak another man joined them, soft-footed. This was Alger, mate of Regnar's ship.

"Trust in me!" he said, his voice low-pitched.

He became the focus of their eyes. He was but half the age of Regnar, but he had the same great strength, the same hardy endurance, the same bold, strong, manly face, for he, too, was a Norseman. A well-appearing man was Alger, and the regularity of his features made him more comely than most of his rougher brethren of the seas. In spite of his youth, his skill and intrepidity had led the Bear Viking to make him second in command of the Strong Cub, and he had never failed in his duty.

"Trust in you?" Thora repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Some dark night we will go from this barren shore, bound for the Hardanger fjord, and Leif will not know until we are far away."

"How," Regnar asked, "can you take the vessel unseen?"

"The way must be found."

"They have armed men."

"We must have cunning."

"But even if the start could be made, our ship, even when repaired, will lack the speed of Leif's swift Sea Rider."

"Said I that we would go in the Strong Cub?"

"You mean——"

"That it is not theft when a prisoner takes his captor's property to get free."

"You would seize Leif's vessel?"

"Ay!" replied Alger simply.

Regnar was confused and uncertain, but Thora grasped the mate's hand, her face the picture of delight.

"Oh, Alger, Alger!" she breathed, "do you that and the gods will surely reward you. Odin and Thor will hear your name, and the vastness of Valhalla will ring with your fame!"

"It will be reward enough for me if Regnar's daughters like my work," said the young man modestly.

"It may be, it may be!" added Thora, wavering between a smile and a sob, so deeply was she moved. "I praise the gods for thy ready wit, good Alger."

"Nay!" he protested. "I have thus far shown only my hardihood. Unless design is mated with accomplishment, my wit will not appear."

"Alger," said the Bear Viking earnestly, "we must rely much on you. Always have you evinced good merit in planning. If you can take us from here by a crafty trick that will outwit this man they now call an Earl, the Hardanger fjord will ring with your praises and the heart of Regnar be yours."

"Nay, nay!" repeated Alger. "Reserve all compliment until I try. Wait!"

"We will wait," replied Thora, "but, meanwhile, we will see what woman's wit can do. I have found the weak point of this Achilles they call Leif Erikson."

"I wonder," murmured Regnar, unheeding her, "what the future is of this new world?"

What, indeed? They could not know that the place where they stood would soon relapse into deserted wilderness, with the faces of white men long unknown, but that, six hundred and twenty years later, another ship was to approach the coast, thread the green-bordered S channel, and land men and women who were to establish a permanent settlement. Neither could they foresee that the name of the later ship would be the Mayflower, nor that its people were to step ashore on a stone to be known to all the world as Plymouth Rock. For these things lay hidden in the heart of a future that speaks only of the coming hour of today.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHOWER OF ARROWS.

PRESENTLY Regnar and Alger moved nearer the water to watch the work of Leif's sailors on board the ships, but Inger remained with her sister and, eying her intently, finally wound an arm around Thora's waist. She had the quick ear and ready wit of her sex, and had been impressed by something the two men seemed to have passed by as nothing.

"Sister," she said in mellow tones, "you spoke of Achilles. He was a mighty man, but he had a weakness. Invulnerable in all other respects, he might be overcome by a wound in the heel."

"Kitten," replied Thora, squeezing the shapely waist she had reciprocally encircled, "it is good that you know of warriors other than those of the Norsemen."

"Your kindness charms me, sister. This Achilles—he had a weak point."

"Warriors sometimes have."

"Yes, sister, and you said that Leif Erikson had his weak point."

"Kitten, you have ears," said Thora, approvingly.

"Pray tell me what it is—will you?"

Inger used the words "will you?" more often than Thora. Thora was brave, ready of mind, forceful of accomplish-

Be sure and read the great story in this issue about the first men who stepped upon the shores of the United States, called, "Leif the Bold; or, First in America." It is a remarkable story. Next week look out for a story of thrilling interest, entitled, "For Family Honor; or, A World-Wide Search." It is a corker. After that one of the strangest stories you ever read will appear, called, "The Electric Flame; or, Brahm Yogi's Power." Take the Ledger, you will always find it full of good things.

ment, and, while thoroughly womanly, gifted with something of a man's decision, while Inger was of gentler traits, though hardly more lovable.

Thora smiled indulgently into the eager face beside her own, and once more pressed the shapely waist. The young of Regnar, the Bear, lived each in the heart of the other, and deep sympathy always passed between them like a vein of invisible gold. Now, standing under a great, spreading linden tree, they made a fairer picture than the foliage of tree, the lift of Viking ships or the wrinkle of the blue harbor waters.

"Leif Erikson!" murmured Thora thoughtfully. "Bold Leif, some call him, for he is a warrior, a sea-king, a masterful man. Nor is he ill-looking, sister."

"Think you so? Why, he has a face as grim as the rocks of Hardanger fjord."

"Perhaps! Still, he does not offend the eye as much as the mind. Know you why I remind you of that? It all goes with the fact that he has a weakness."

"What is it?"

"Leif has adopted the new religion they call Christianity."

"But—but wherein lies his weakness in that?"

"He has always been a follower of Odin and Thor, like us, but he has changed his belief. Did you not mark the rapt expression on his face as he referred to it? This child of a Leif has a new toy, and is much taken with it."

"But I do not see——"

"Kitten, you shall be told. I have heard him mention his adopted religion, and as I know of it only by repute I shall presently become curious. I shall go to him to ask about it. He will be delighted that I do it, and will explain what it is. While he talks I shall be crafty. My eyes will look into his, innocent as those of a child. My face will carry a grave, wistful, yet eager expression, my lips will frame the questions I shall drop sweet as honey. Do you see what next?"

"I think I do."

"I will charm Leif Erikson, and finally he will let us, of the ship Strong Cub, sail away for Hardanger fjord."

"He cannot help loving you."

"Nay, nay!" exclaimed Thora, flushing deeply. "I will stop short of that. I would wound no man's heart, for 'tis an ill thing to do. No, he shall not love me, but think me deserving of kinder treatment than he now bestows upon us. He will outfit the ship and send us home with his blessings."

"It will be so," replied Inger confidently. "No one can resist you when you try your arts. It will be so. Oh! joy, we shall leave this bleak place and go back to Norseland. But, Thora, put no slight on his religion, for our mother always said that was an ill thing to do. Be a person right or wrong, his religion should be respected."

"It will certainly be so now. I war not on his religion, but on him. Kitten, you are better of heart than any one else alive since our mother died. Pray the gods that I may find my way to Leif Erikson's weak point like a second Thor come with his mighty hammer."

"It surely will be so."

Inger answered gently, but did not tell all that was in her mind. Thora was conscientious, and had meant all she said, but her sister felt certain that Leif Erikson could not talk with her, as had been planned, without yielding his love captive to her.

If he listened to Thora's sweet words his interest would not stop at religious enthusiasm. Leif had a heart.

"Stay!" Thora suddenly exclaimed. "What is to do in the ship?"

Inger looked. Some of Leif's sailors, ransacking the Strong Cub, had found Regnar's banner, a fine fabric with a deep green field and the figure of a bear worked in black in its center. This they had on deck, and while one of their number was flaunting it in the wind roughly and ill-naturedly, others, in sympathy with his mood, were clutching at it with hands bent on destruction.

"Tear it in shreds and fling it to the water-trolls!" cried a fierce savage with hair and beard like a red forest.

The cry was echoed brutally.

"Tear the Bear flag to pieces, and the teeth of the Strong Cub will fall out!"

Violent hands had just touched the banner when Leif's booming voice swept to every ear.

"Stop! Stay your claws, accursed Yotuns. He who rends the flag, I will flog until his back cleaves into two score strips. Stop!"

Every mischievous hand fell passive.

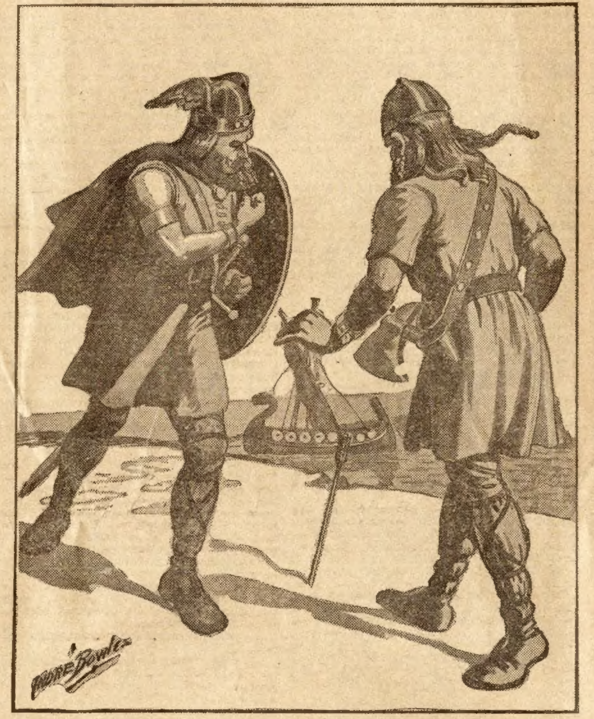
"Fellows," the leader proceeded, "we do not war on cloth, but on men. Leave the flag alone. Sigvat, return it to the cabin and hang it there decently. After that let no man dare touch it."

There was no demur. Lesser men did not argue when Leif spoke in anger. The flag disappeared as Sigvat respectfully carried it below, while Inger pressed her sister's arm.

"Love of Embla," she whispered, "the Red Raven chief is not all brute. He has a drop of kindness for the Black Bear."

"I wonder why?" mused Thora aloud. "His way is not the way of the gods of Odin and Thor, but that new religion of his—I wonder!"

Meanwhile, Leif had turned away, forgetful of the incident that was so much to every man and woman who belonged in the Strong Cub. He had work to do.



An arrow fell between them.

Calling Ludwig, the carpenter of the Sea Rider, he bade him get his axmen in action and build huts for occupancy as speedily as was convenient. It was the leader's will to stay where he had landed. While sailing toward the coast he had marked the land surroundings well. The shore rose in what the discoverers always termed two hills, although, really, the first was but a slight rise, a mere approach to the real hill. Distant from the latter was the uplift he considered a range.

On the first rise he had planted his banner with the Red Raven bravely defiant, and there he would stay.

Ludwig hailed his mates, and soon the ring of axes was abroad. To the first steps Leif gave little attention. He had summoned the ever-valuable Thorkel.

"We will widen our scrutiny of the land," the chief said. "Take four lusty fellows and scout beyond where Sigurd, the Skald, searched. Be heedful to the fertility of the earth, but, mainly, we want to know positively that no human being dwells here before us. Go!"

The party departed, and then Leif was accosted by Biorn, Olaf and Haakon, three of his chief men.

"Leif Erikson," spoke Olaf gravely, "we would have a serious word with you. Sigurd, in his enthusiasm, has hailed you as Earl of this new world. We who are now here desire to make the word a fact. We crave your permission to formally proclaim you Earl."

Leif regarded them unmoved.

"An empty word," he returned indifferently.

"It is not empty in Norseland."

"We are in a new world."

"All the more reason why we should have the word in use. Well do you know, Leif, that a title has great weight with fellows like those who bear us company. Leif, warrior of the Red Raven, is much, but that much plus the dignity of Earl is more. Let us proclaim you formally, and cement the office by crossing swords over your head."

Erikson was silent. Somewhere in his barbarian heart the impression was oddly aroused that, in this new world, there should be great simplicity of living, but he was not blind to the arguments he had heard. Biorn had snared simplicity in the coils of logic, and made fast the folds.

There was no modesty in the hesitation, no false pretense of equal rights to men, but calm consideration of what was best for all hands who followed the path where the Red Raven fluttered.

Olaf and Haakon added something, but it was to be doubted that Leif heard. He was thrashing the problem out alone. Presently he looked at Biorn.

"You have omitted the main reason why the title may be used," he said simply. "It is possible that other men may appear here, covetous to wrest from us what we have wrested from untamed nature. Rank carries dignity, stifles presumption, and gives hostile persons serious thought. Not to glorify myself, but to protect my settlement, let the swords be crossed above my head."

Biorn bent his head gravely.

"Hail, Earl Leif!" he spoke in a low but fervent voice, and Olaf and Haakon echoed what he said.

Thus was the first Earl bred in the new world.

It was an hour later that Ludwig the carpenter came to his master.

"Leif," he said bluffly, "I have a plan for your judgment. May I not build a pen of stout posts, a hardy stockade full twenty feet high, so we can therein confine all of the tribe of Regnar, the Bear, from this time on? If it be without a gate, and one man watches the prisoners, I'll swear by Odin and Thor that not one of them escapes."

"To what place would they escape?" asked Leif, smiling slightly.

"Why, to their ship, of course."

"You forget, good Ludwig, that it is easier for us to carry away their masts and sails and hide them than to build a stockade. So long as they behave not ill we will not restrict their movements. Build divers huts, but no pen."

"It would be different if I planned it," quoth Ludwig, tugging at his great beard. "I have no fondness for Regnar's lot—not even for the maidens he calls his own. Hast watched them? Captives though they are they spring about here on foot as light as that of a mountain deer. That is not well, for I would have them mope in mind and drag their feet when walking."

He glanced down the slope and then pointed.

"Look!" he added. "There stands that one of the Bear's young that is called Thora, in conversation with the knave named Alger. Mark how light her manner is, and how she smiles happily. How dare she be happy! And Alger—bah! the men of the Strong Bear tell me he is betrothed to Regnar's daughter, her accepted lover. That tars him with the Regnar brush!"

"Let them love," replied Leif easily. "I care not. Hold forth your ax, Ludwig." The order was obeyed, and the leader touched the implement. "A good ax," he continued. "Try it again on the tree you lately left. Build me dwelling-huts with speed."

The carpenter frowned and turned away, but just then an arrow fell between the two men. They wheeled and faced the upper hill, but as they did so the air was crossed by a flight of similar weapons and a full dozen barbed missiles fell around them. The breath of war was astir.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this most interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

ALL ABOUT THE DOG.

All hail the dog, the friend of man!
He always does the best he can;
He is intelligent and brave
And loyal, but he won't behave!

Of policy this noble beast
I grieve to say has not the least;
He bites the grocer in the leg
And wags his tail at every yegg!

The bones he saves from what he's fed
He buries in your flower bed;
He digs the sweet geraniums up
And spares the burdock, silly pup!

He smiles and leaps and wags his tail
At every peddler within hail,
But when your rich aunt calls, why he
Snaps at her venerated knee!

He loves to chase the neighbor's cat,
To guard the hallway of the flat
And bite the landlord who had meant
To lower (so he says) your rent.

A noble beast is this canine,
His nature is so true and fine,
For him with love my bosom melts,
But give him, please, to some one else!

* * *

Kept Her Nerve.

"It is so perfectly easy," said the girl with the bronze-gold hair, "that it almost seems a shame to do it."

"Were you speaking to me?" asked the blue-eyed girl.

"I met Fairleigh Andrewson today in town."

"And what is it that is so easy? Fairleigh?"

"You know him, don't you? Oh, yes, I remember now you used to be rather sweet on him until I came along, but—"

"He used to be, and is—"

"I know just what you are about to say, that he used to nearly run you to death. I believe in talking that way myself. The minute I saw him I realized that we were made for one another."

"Fiddlesticks!"

"That's right, keep the flags flying! I admit it was anybody's game for a little while. I have to laugh sometimes when I think of the dressmakers' bills papa had to stand for while I was making my amateurish efforts to sidetrack Fairleigh. But what I like about Fairleigh is the fact that he pays little attention to externals."

"You said you met him today—"

"Well, the new gowns did not make him bat an eye, and I don't believe he really realized that I was incumbering the earth. Then I hit upon a new scheme. I looked over my cards carefully, and arranged my game as if I were playing for my life. And I'm here to tell you it is working out beautifully. The fruit is now all ready to drop into my apron. I began by ignoring him, and having to be introduced all over again each time we met. Then I would coldly recognize him, but with a faraway look, as if I was trying to recollect when and where I had met him. And as I grew cold he grew warm. He began to be piqued and interested, and pretty soon he had turned about and was chasing me as fast as he had been running away. I could tell by the way he acted when we met today that he is all ready to surrender. I bumped into him, and before he had time to apologize I had told him 'Hello' and was on my way. He yelled: 'Say, wait! I want to tell you something!' But I just kept going. He was ready to propose right there on the street, and I was just dying to permit him to; but I shall not permit him to propose for a month."

"And then it will be too late. What Fairleigh wanted to tell you was that he and I are to be married quietly next week. The recent death of his brother makes him desirous of avoiding all display, so a big wedding will be dispensed with. But I made him promise he would hunt you up and tell you."

"Oh, you darling! You knew how pleased I would be, didn't you!"

* * *

Like a Lady.

Gladys' mother was entertaining visitors, when suddenly the door was flung open, and in burst Gladys like the proverbial whirlwind.

"My dear child," said the mother, rebukingly. "I never heard such a noise as you made coming downstairs. Now go right back and come downstairs properly."

Gladys retired and a few moments later reentered the room.

"Did you hear me come down that time, mamma?" she asked.

"No, dear," replied the mother. "Now, why can't you always behave like that? You came downstairs like a lady then."

"Yes, mamma," said Gladys, dutifully, "I slid down the banisters."

* * *

Comparative.

A German peasant had just lost his faithful cow. His wife became so grieved over the loss that her heart was broken, and she, too, died. Scarcely was she buried when one of the neighbors came and offered his daughter, another his sister, and a third his niece, for a wife, whereupon the farmer remarked:

"Well, I can easily see that it is better to lose a wife than a cow in this town. As soon as my wife is dead a choice of half a dozen wives is offered me, but when my cow died, they didn't offer me a single one."

The Count's Revenge

Or, AN EYE FOR AN EYE

By Adrienne Roucolle

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CHAPTER VI.

THE MARRIAGE.

THE next morning at ten Count del Sarto had Guilio summon his daughter to his apartment. The girl entered the little sitting-room a few moments later, more ethereal than ever in her simple morning toilet of soft, clinging material of a delicate pink tint, which harmonized so well with her pale, healthy beauty. Noticing the heavy eyes with their dark circles and the drooping mouth, Count del Sarto asked, without however the least show of tenderness, but rather with the impersonal interest a host might take in the welfare of a passing guest:

"Did you not rest well last night, Francesca?"

"No, sir. I was unable to sleep."

"The excitement and fatigue of the trip no doubt," commented the Count, as he offered his daughter a chair.

She sat down without answering, her sensitive mouth quivering. She would not tell this hard, unfeeling man that the lack of affection of his greeting the day before had been the cause of her sleeplessness. Instinctively she felt he would not understand. For a time there was silence, Count del Sarto closely examining the girl who sat before him with lowered eyes and folded hands, waiting his pleasure. Perhaps a touch of humanity and pity reached his hardened heart as he realized how frail and tender the girl was, therefore how easy it would be for adversity to crush her very life with the breaking of her heart. Alarmed perhaps with this first stir of tenderness which had come to him in twenty years, Count del Sarto said abruptly, his voice harder than ever in its abruptness:

"You were eighteen your last birthday, were you not?"

Francesca started, looked up in anxious inquiry, answering timidly:

"Yes, senor, the fifteenth of last month."

"So I thought," commented the Count. "You have, therefore, reached the age when I must think of arranging for your future."

"My future?" The question was an affrighted demand for explanation, as the child-woman felt an instinctive dread of any future her unloving father might plan for her.

"Certainly, your future. The time to select a suitable husband for you has arrived, and I have selected that husband."

"A husband! You—you want me to marry!" Francesca rose to her feet in sudden alarm, her lips going white, her eyes large and worried. The word "husband" to this convent-bred girl had the chill terror of the unknown.

"I do. Marriage is the only life for a woman, the only sphere in which she can fulfill her mission as a woman."

"But, senor," the girl stammered in answer to this authoritative remark, "I—I—had other—aspirations. I intended to turn my thoughts to God and serve Him only."

"You wanted to become a nun?"

"Yes, senor. Life in the convent is so beautiful, so restful. I never see them weep; they are never unhappy. Is it not natural that I should like to share their peace?"

"Do you ever weep? Are you unhappy? The way you speak one would think that you were."

Francesca hung her head without answering, fearing to arouse the anger of this man she knew so little and whom she feared in consequence.

"Answer me," sternly ordered the Count, seeing the girl was not going to reply.

Lifting her troubled eyes to his, she said hesitatingly:

"Sometimes, senor."

"What is the cause of your unhappiness? I thought I had always kept you well supplied with money. I gave orders that you be given as much liberty as the rules of the institution allowed."

"Money is not everything in life, senor," protested Francesca with a sudden show of feeling. "Had I been given my choice I would have preferred a little affection to all the gold in the world. The feeling that no one cared for me outside the gentle nuns, that in the whole world I had no one who would be sorry if I died, who would care if I were ill! Ah, senor, you can not understand what that means to a heart that wants, that longs for love. I——" Suddenly she paused, confused, embarrassed, realizing that she had just bared her heart to a man who she felt would neither sympathize nor understand.

His daughter's outburst was a revelation to Count del Sarto, though in no way, at least consciously to him, did this insight into the loving, hungry heart change his feelings toward the girl. Half-sneeringly he asked:

"Did you think that the taking of vows would fill the seeming blank of your life?"

"It would have turned my thoughts from the things of this world to those above. I would cease to envy the other girls when they talked of their mothers, their fathers, their brothers and sisters, for I would have replaced all of these things of earth with the contemplation of those of Heaven. Since this life could give me nothing, I could at least strive to make that of the next world less barren and desolate."

In the enthusiasm of her plea, a dash of color had come to the white cheeks, the eyes shone in exaltation, and the timid, frightened, trembling girl was transformed into a woman vibrating with feeling and excitation. Count del Sarto looked at her in amazement, admiring in spite of himself the sudden glow of beauty this animation brought to her face, which when in repose was too solemn and sad for one so young.

Man of the world as he was, he realized that this deep, intense nature, which as yet did not know itself, was not made for the dull, placid life of the convent, but rather needed the trials and joys of the world to satisfy human longings. Religion might satisfy her for a time, but it never could entirely fill that still unawakened soul. Firmly he replied:

"Your idea was good in its way, but mine is better, since it promises something for this life rather than a somewhat doubtful reward in a world to come of whose existence we have no proof."

"Oh, senor!" broke in the girl, in shocked horror, but he did not let her finish her thought, silencing her with an authoritative gesture, adding in somewhat contemptuous tones:

"It is useless for us to enter into a discussion concerning the next world, since I am sure our ideas are so different that we would never agree. What we must think of for the present is your future as I have planned it."

"Oh, senor, you surely will not force me to marry this man whom I do not know and who, not knowing me, certainly does not love me!" pleaded Francesca in a panic of terror, realizing as she did that if this stern, relentless man insisted she would not have the courage to disobey him.

"Francesca, sit down and let us talk it over quietly."

"But will you insist on my marrying?" she asked, as under the order of his imperative eye she resumed her seat.

"I shall do more than insist, I shall order, was the merciless reply, and the girl with a sinking heart, afraid of her fate without knowing why, said no more. Count del Sarto continued: "Marriage will give you, either through your husband or through your children, the love you crave and which I realize your intense nature demands. The one I have selected for your husband is young and handsome, he bears one of the oldest names of France, he is well educated and a gentleman. Therefore, it will not be hard for you to learn to love him."

"But will he love me?" asked Francesca, realizing in the naive logic of her innocent heart that it is not enough for only one to love, if happiness is to come to that one.

Count del Sarto hesitated for a second before he answered that question, realizing as he did the opposition which the poor child would find should she ever try to win her husband's heart. But no thought of compassion, no hesitation came to him. He would carry out his fiendish plans no matter if she had to be sacrificed to his revenge. Abruptly he answered:

"It will be for you to win that love. You are young and fair; it should not be difficult if you know how."

"But will I know how?" she questioned further, feeling in a subconscious way that she would have much to overcome, and that therefore mere youth and beauty would prove very weak weapons.

"A woman always knows how," was the Count's evasive reply. Then fearing that he might lose ground, if he allowed the discussion to continue, he added in harsh, decisive tones: "You are to meet your future husband on Thursday evening next at a dinner I will give at the Casino. I wish to know if you have a suitable dinner gown. Your trunk seemed too light as the men carried it up to your room to contain very much feminine finery."

Bewildered, feeling as she did that she was to have no say as to her future, too little used to the ways of the world to know that she could not be forced into a marriage she did not want, the poor girl stammered, as she forced back the tears which choked her:

"I have no dinner gown, senor; at least nothing like what the other girls told me were dinner gowns."

That answer showed Count del Sarto that he had conquered, that his daughter was afraid to oppose his wishes. Rising he said in the most matter-of-fact way:

"I suspected that much. Go dress for the street, and we will go see what is to be found in the way of dresses in Luchon, as we would not have time to go to Toulouse to buy one. Join me here in half an hour," and he walked toward his bedroom, into which he disappeared, leaving Francesca dazed and too much under the sway of the strong, inflexible will of her father to dare voice aloud the feelings which filled her very soul with fright and alarm. Meekly she left the room and went to hers, where she began changing her dress as he had ordered.

The minute Francesca had left the room, Count del Sarto wrote a hurried note of invitation to Monsieur de Beaufort and his son for the Thursday evening dinner, an invitation which was a mere order, not a note of courtesy. He then called Guilio and ordered:

"Guilio, I want you to go to the Casino and reserve a private dining-room for me for Thursday evening and order a dinner of four covers. Tell them to spare no expense. Then take this note to Monsieur de Beaufort and await his answer."

Guilio took the note and left the room, while Count del Sarto changed his white negligee suit for more formal street clothes. A thoughtful frown contracted his brow as the remembrance of his interview with his daughter returned to his mind, and he vaguely realized that in the girl's intense nature, which love might awaken at any moment, he might find complications of which he had not dreamed. But used as he was to sweep all obstacles from his road, he muttered half-aloud:

"What if she did try to stand in my way? Can't I crush her like I shall do the others?"

This heartless resolution cleared his brow, and lighting a cigar he waited for Francesca to join him, which she did shortly, and together they went out to buy the dinner gown for the fateful dinner.

It would have been hard to say which of the two was the more moved, Hector or Francesca, when in the commonplace setting of a private dining-room at the Casino they met for the first time and murmured the usual words of greeting which the occasion demanded. Monsieur de Beaufort stood by, pale and moved, as he watched the meeting, though somewhat relieved as he saw the girl's gentle beauty, which seemed to indicate that his son's life would not be utterly ruined.

When a man's heart is filled with the image of a woman he loves or thinks he loves, he is in no condition to admire another woman, even though that woman be a million times fairer. Thus it was with Hector de Beaufort. He could not deny that the girl was beautiful and cultured, but the strongest feeling he could have for her was one of pity that she should be sacrificed as well as himself. He was too much of a gentleman to make her suffer for the faults of another, but he knew he could never love her as a wife, and if fate should will it that she should love him, she would suffer at his coldness and indifference, which he felt nothing could overcome or lessen. To him Jeanne de Granville, from which he was forever separated and whose heart he knew he had broken, was the only woman in the world worthy of his love and devotion, thus proving that with us human beings it is always that which we have not which seems the most desirable, for in the comparison of the physical charms of the two women, Francesca's mysterious, alluring beauty made Jeanne de Granville's doll-like loveliness pale into insignificance. This, however, Hector de Beaufort was in no position to judge. Time might open his eyes, but for the present he could only think that he was being parted from the woman he loved.

Francesca's feelings were far more complex. Hector's pleasing personality impressed her favorably; the touch of his hand had awakened feelings within her the nature of which she could not understand, but which troubled the calm placidity of her mind. She wanted to cry, yet she felt happy. Her fears of the future, aroused by her father's mention of marriage, vanished with her first timid look into Hector's boyish eyes, so different from the hard, steely ones of her father. She felt that when she knew him better she would not be afraid of him, as she was of her father; he would at least understand her feelings.

The dinner passed slowly and painfully for the three guests, Count del Sarto alone enjoying the surcharged atmosphere, filled with the thoughts, fears, hopes, and sufferings of the four mentalities, which, while the lips pronounced the commonplace remarks of everyday conversation, continued their silent exchange of wireless messages which the soul feels, though the brain does not always understand. After the dinner, Count del Sarto insisted on going to the concert, securing one of the most prominent boxes, that all of the fashionable audience might comment on the first public appearance of Hector de Beaufort and the beautiful stranger, who tomorrow would be known as Count del Sarto's daughter. The sensation he wanted was produced, since more opera-glasses were turned upon them than upon the stage; and the next day every man who met either Hector or his father asked the name of the beautiful woman with whom he had been seen the night before at the concert.

During the week which followed Count del Sarto insisted that Monsieur de Beaufort and his son be seen constantly in public with his daughter and himself. He knew the tortures this inflicted on the elder man, who realized more and more that his son's happiness was being sacrificed to his salvation. At the end of a week the engagement was formally announced, Hector suffering untold agonies as he realized what pain and shame this engagement must bring to the unhappy Jeanne de Granville, who must think that it was because of the beautiful stranger that he had broken his word to her. And what hurt him the most was that he could never clear himself in her eyes. The more he suffered, the deeper became his resentment against the weak, sinful man who was the cause of all this misery.

The return to Toulouse brought another heartbreak, for here he heard that Jeanne de Granville, after an illness of over two weeks, had been ordered to Italy in the hope that a change of scenes would help her failing health. The more he realized that the girl had loved him and was suffering from that love, the more did he love her in return, and curse the fate which separated them forever. Besides, the coldness of some of his friends who were also friends of the De Granvilles, showed him that he was being blamed.

After the civil marriage required by the laws of France, the religious ceremony was celebrated with great pomp from the Church de la Dalbade, the elite of Toulouse's social, politicial and official world attending. The universal impression being one of admiration for the timid, gentle bride, whose beauty appealed to all, and the solemn, almost sorrowful groom, who, the men thought, did not seem to appreciate his good fortune in having won the peerless creature walking so modestly by his side. As all the interest was centered upon the bridal couple, Monsieur de Beaufort's unnerved and despairing condition passed by unnoticed, and very few remarked that he stammered incoherent answers to the usual congratulations which are current in such occasions.

According to Count del Sarto's wishes, which in this case were orders, the young people left that very night for a six months' wedding tour which was to take in the principal cities of Europe.

"One thing I insist upon," had said the Count to Hector, "that you stay away six months."

Both father and son had realized that this order meant that he wanted to be alone with his victim that he might carry out his plans of revenge. Monsieur de Beaufort secretly rejoiced that his son was to be spared further suffering; the young man was anxious, fearing that his father's moral weakness might lead him to some act which would disgrace the name for which he had sacrificed so much. Before leaving, Hector had therefore said to his father:

"Remember, father, that I have given up everything for the sake of our honor. Don't do anything to place that honor in danger a second time."

"I promise you to do my share, no matter what is demanded of me," had answered Monsieur de Beaufort manfully.

"I expect no less of you, father," had said Hector in reply, and thus father and son parted, and the young couple started on that strange wedding tour, with a cold, indifferent groom and an already loving bride whose heart had just found itself.

When the train had steamed out of the station, Count del Sarto had lifted his hat to Monsieur de Beaufort with the threatening though smiling "au revoir," leaving him more frightened, more apprehensive than ever for the future. Returning to his hotel Count del Sarto said to Guilio:

"Pack. We leave for Rome tonight."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOTHER.

AN HOUR after reaching Rome, Count del Sarto was in private conference with the head of the detective agency which had been working for him for some years, keeping him informed as to the conduct and whereabouts of the woman he had hired to become the mother of the child he had intended to use in avenging the wrongs of his dead wife. Through them he had been able to obtain a faithful record of her life since he had paid her the sum promised and sent her away. This record he had sent to Monsieur de Beaufort the day of the wedding that he might read it after the bridal couple had left on their wedding tour. He knew enough of the pride of name and family a French noble always feels to be sure that the reading of this record would fill the proud man with shame and despair, as he realized that the offspring of such a woman was now his son's wife.

Scarcely answering with a stiff bow the detective's obsequious greeting, Count del Sarto asked with abrupt hauteur:

"Was the woman Ottavia Rignago released today, as you stated she would be?"

"She must be released by this time, senor, though my man has not yet reported," answered the detective.

"Have you carried out my instructions?"

"Yes, senor. One of my men is to shadow her ceaselessly from the minute she leaves the jail to make sure that she does not fail to keep the appointment you had us make for you at the roadhouse south of the Villa del Rosa."

"Very well. I am to meet her tonight at seven-thirty in private room No. 9, am I not?"

"That is the arrangement we made, senor."

"Very well, that is all I want to know for the present," and Count del Sarto walked to the door, the detective calling him back with the question:

"Does not the senor want to take one of my men with him for protection? The tavern is ill-famed, as you no doubt know, and it is not safe to be alone in that neighborhood after dark."

"I shall need no one," answered the Count. "I will take my servant with me, and we shall both be armed. I don't want the woman to suspect that I am on friendly terms with any one connected with the law."

"I see," answered the detective, and Count del Sarto left him.

At seven-thirty that night, two men poorly clothed, with hats drawn down over the eyes, and coat collars turned up, entered the Beninsco's tavern on the outskirts of Rome, asking for room No. 9. They were at once admitted into a small, ill-smelling room through the dirty window of which the last glow of the rapidly-descending twilight entered, lighting up the white, besotted face of a woman seated before the rough pine table on which stood a half-empty bottle of cheap wine which she had been drinking while waiting for them. She looked up when they entered, saying with the brazen effrontery of the woman of the streets:

"I'm drinking to your health, friend. I judged that you won't balk at paying for a bottle, seeing you took enough interest to invite me here. What's the game?"

While the woman spoke thus, the taller of the two men was contemplating her with almost fiendish satisfaction. The slovenly dress, with its attempt at cheap finery, the coarse, vice-marked face, the rasping voice, spoke of a depth of degradation which thrilled him, as he thought what asset this would be to him in his coming vengeance. Here was a woman who would do anything for money, and this was just what he needed. Seeing that he did not answer her question, the woman finished drinking her glass of wine; then, as she filled it again, questioned once more:

"Come on, don't stand on ceremony with me, but spit out what you have to say. You want something of me or you wouldn't have come out here just to see my pretty mug, though there was a time when you would, even if I do say it. I was considered a beauty in my time, but drink and prison fare don't improve the looks," and she laughed in that pitiful attempt at mirth which women of her class affect to hide the real misery of their souls.

Motioning to Guilio to leave the room, Count del Sarto sat down beside the woman, remarking with apparent unconcern:

"You must have been beautiful, or that French nobleman would not have taken the trouble to try to reform you by keeping you one whole year almost a prisoner in his villa."

The woman, who was bringing the glass of wine to her lips, almost let it fall as she replaced it on the table, saying in abrupt inquiry:

"Who told you that about me?"

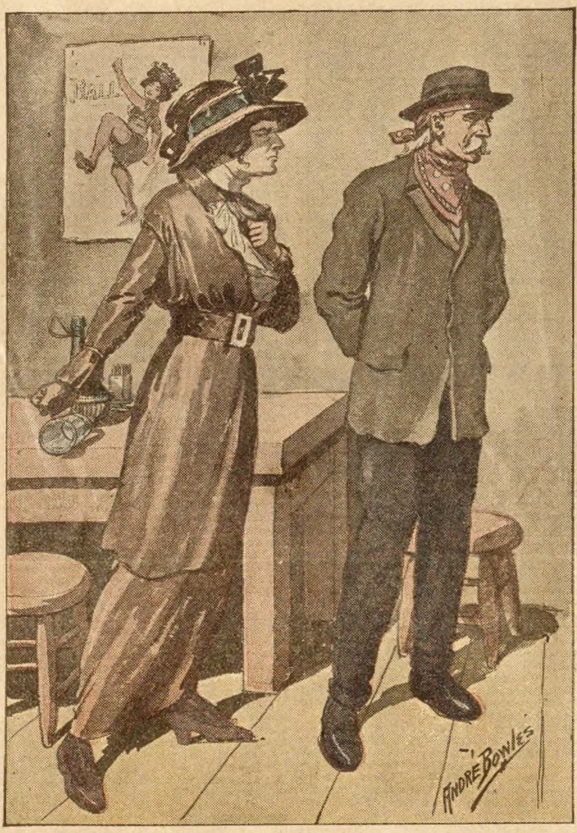
"I don't remember. One of your former friends, no doubt," evasively answered the Count, supporting without the quiver of a feature her searching gaze, feeling that the drink-beclouded brain, together with the changes which eighteen years had brought upon his face, would not enable her to remember him. So many lovers had come and gone that it was not likely any one of them would have left a lasting impression. Besides, eighteen years is a long time to remember.

Count del Sarto was right; the woman did not recognize in the white-haired, eagle-eyed stranger the young man who years before had exacted such a queer bargain of her. Fiercely she said:

"Did that friend think the Count wanted to reform me? I surely never told any one such a big one," and she laughed more with rage than with mirth. "Reform me!" she continued, without giving the Count a chance to speak, "that wasn't his plan; he wanted a child and he didn't care how he got it, it seems, so he hired me, miserable wretch that he was!"

"Miserable wretch! You don't mean that you——"

"Hate him? Yes, I do. I suppose you think I should be grateful for the money he gave me. Well, I am not! That money could never pay for the suffering which the awakening of my soul to the instincts of motherhood has since cost me! With the first cry of that baby I found myself, with my first look into that baby's face I knew that I wasn't all bad, and I swore to myself to become better still."



"I would not exchange my soul for yours!"

"Yet you abandoned the child! You left it with the father, and did not once inquire after it or seek to see it again," broke in Count del Sarto, in sudden uneasiness, something in the woman's changed face, vibrating voice, and flashing eyes filling him with vague alarm. What if the feelings of which she spoke were genuine? He might find her a menace rather than a help.

But Ottavia Rignago was laughing in half-drunken mirth, as tossing off another glass of wine, she answered:

"Sure, I abandoned a child, sure I never made inquiries about that child, since it was not my child, and I cared nothing about its fate."

"Not your child!" Count del Sarto had leaped to his feet. "Whose was it then? What became of yours?"

In the sudden uncontrollable excitement which had taken possession of him, Count del Sarto was hurling question after question, as he shook the woman rudely by the shoulder. His hat had fallen off, and the collar of his ulster had parted so that his face was now plainly revealed. In a vivid flash of memory, the woman suddenly remembered, for rising to her feet, she cried hoarsely:

"You!"

Count del Sarto knew he was recognized, but at that moment he did not care. What really mattered now was to know what had become of the child on whose base parentage hinged the whole of his vengeance. Casting all caution aside, he answered:

"Since you have recognized me, you must realize that I will force you to tell me what you meant when you said that the child I have raised is not your child and mine!"

Entirely sobered by the shock of the recognition, the woman looked at the Count in derision, answering:

"You will not need to force me to answer, since I have often longed for the chance to tell you the truth. I am happy to think I outwitted the one who was the cause of all my mental anguish, which only came to me after I had become a mother!"

"I don't care about your mental anguish; tell me about the child," brutally interrupted the Count.

"I know you care for nothing," answered the woman, with supreme contempt, "and though you are better than me in birth and outward morality, I would not exchange my soul for yours, though mine in the eyes of the world is so sin-laden."

With mad impatience, Count del Sarto seized the woman's arm, asking again, this time with threatening anger:

"Tell me about the child!"

The woman tore herself away, and facing the Count in fearless arrogance, answered him:

"You remember you were called away for a week when the baby was only ten days old; the wet nurse you had first secured having been taken sick, you had been forced to replace her by a young peasant woman whose baby was about a month old, and whom she weaned to take care of your child, the wages you offered causing her to make the sacrifice?"

"Yes, yes, I remember. Go on."

"One night while you were away and I was alone with the new nurse, my baby was taken with convulsions, and she died before we could summon the doctor. Accusing the woman of having killed the baby, I was able to force her to consent to make the exchange of her living child for the corpse of my dead one, knowing well that you would not pay the reward promised if you knew the child was dead."

"It's a lie!" broke in Count del Sarto, in hoarse anger.

"You can prove it for yourself, since the peasant woman is not dead. She is still living on the farm, where I go to visit her every year when I am not in jail. She will show you where your child is buried; she will even tell you that though she has had other children, she can never forget the one she had to give up to save herself, as she thought, from being accused of killing my baby."

Count del Sarto was stunned. For a second he feared his revenge, that revenge for which he had labored so long, was being taken from him. Then he looked at the woman before him, and realized that such a woman could be bought in spite of her high-sounding remarks about her instincts of motherhood. In a second his face cleared. What did it really matter if Francesca was the child of the infamous Ottavia Rignago or that of an honest peasant woman, if only Monsieur de Beaufort thought the former was the mother.

"Sit down, Ottavia," he ordered, in tones suddenly calm, "and let us talk. What you say may or may not be the truth. I will investigate later. What concerns me now is to know if you are willing to make money, lots of money, without word, without risk, money that will be given you just for the asking."

The woman had resumed her seat and was drinking again. All the beautiful light which her thoughts of the past had called to her face had disappeared, and she was again the low, debased, half-drunken creature who had greeted the Count when he had entered the room.

"No deal like the first one?" she laughed coarsely.

"No," answered the Count, "something entirely different from what you have ever done, but which brings big returns."

"And you say there will be no risk?"

"None whatever."

"Then fire away. What is it? With her elbows on the table, her chin resting in her hands, her eyes fixed on his, the woman waited..

"The child you claim belongs to the peasant woman, is a young lady now," began the Count.

The woman's eyes clouded, her face twitched, and she said, half to herself, half to him:

"She would be eighteen if she had lived!"

"Yes, eighteen, therefore old enough to marry."

"What's that to me?" asked the woman fiercely, "since she's dead."

"The child you passed off for yours is living, and it is of this child I speak."

"Again what is she to me?"

"This much. The girl has married into one of the noblest families of France, a family so proud of the honor of their name as to be willing to sacrifice their entire fortune to save it from the least stain. Now, with all due consideration to your many good points, you are not exactly the sort of woman most people would want for a connection, even through marriage. For instance, if you were to appear on the scene now that the girl is married and off on her wedding tour, and set forth your claims of motherhood, I believe the young man's father would be willing to pay you a pretty good price to keep you away. Understand?"

"I see—it's blackmail you suggest," answered the woman, as she looked straight before her in a meditative stare, mentally figuring out the pros and cons of the proposition, her native shrewdness asserting itself above the fumes of the wine.

"Well, in a way I suppose it could be called that, though in talking over such things, it is not always necessary to mention the name," answered Count del Sarto, as he narrowly watched the woman's impassive face, from which he could gather nothing of the mental work going on in the brain.

"What's to be your share? I don't suppose you're in this for your health alone?" asked the woman, still without looking at him.

"Nothing, I don't need money. I am simply trying to help you out, feeling that I did not just treat you right in the past."

She turned her eyes on him with a startled look, which changed the next second into one of ironical contempt, as she asked:

"Did you really think I'd be fool enough to swallow that whole, or do you think me drunker than I really am? Since when have you gotten to think so much of me as to feel remorse for the past? Better cut out the stage play and come out openly. Put your cards face up on the table; it'll work better with me. I must be sure you haven't an ace up your sleeve before I consent to take five or maybe ten years of prison on the game. You may be very clever, but I am no infant myself, so if we're going to be pals in this deal, let's be open and frank, as pals should be."

The rude common sense of her logic appealed to him. In her small, narrow eye and firm, square chin he saw evidence of the fact that she was not a woman easily influenced. He noticed further that she had ceased drinking. Her mind was alert and her reasoning cleared by an effort of her will. He saw he had to tell the truth.

"Well, if you wish to know it, I want revenge on the man I am asking you to pursue. I want him hounded to death. I want him to be in constant fear of exposure. I want him ruined financially and mentally. The money you can have, his sufferings I will claim."

She had not taken her eyes from his face during the whole time he had

(Continued on page seventeen.)

The Appletree Pension

By James C. Threlfall

MRS. ELIJAH APPLETREE had a Pension. The sum of money that a grateful Republic paid Mrs. Appletree in token of services rendered by her husband in the preservation of said Republic in the days of his youth was small, that is to say, it would have been considered small by a Rockefeller or a Carnegie.

But such things should be weighed according to their relative value, and in Limestone County, that portion of the Ozark Mountain country where Mrs. Appletree sojourned, thirty-six dollars per quarter is a tidy sum.

The Limestone County soil is rough and thin, and yields but a meager return to the unremitting efforts of its population. The opportunities of achieving competence are rare, and it is only by being strangers to luxury, and by living a life of almost primordial simplicity, that your Limestone Countyan is able to make ends meet at all.

A Pension therefore sets a Limestone Countyan apart. If a man is its possessor, he is entitled to run for the State Legislature in the fall or for the County Judgeship in the spring. If a woman, she is entitled to take turns living with her children.

Mrs. Appletree, after the death of her husband, lived alternately with her two children, Hennery and Mary Jane.

If there was another forty-acre patch in all Limestone County with thinner soil and steeper side hills than the forty where Hennery's "hewed-log" house frowned down on Dry Creek, it must have been the forty where Mary Jane and her lord and master, Jonathan Carney, had reared their modest rooftree beside the clear waters of Spider River.

Mrs. Appletree "helped" the family she lived with. Thirty-six dollars per quarter means pretty nice "helpings" under some circumstances. In this case it meant that the particular family with whom she sojourned had biscuit once a day instead of an undeviating fare of cornbread. It meant the temporary banishment of wild onions from the bill of fare, it meant more fat in the gravy and more gravy on the potatoes.

While the widow tried to divide her stays evenly into three-month periods, she was bound by no ironclad rules. She wasn't proof against any special reason which might develop for prolonging a sojourn. She might have her oilcloth-covered box in the buggy ready to drive away from Hennry's when the opportune discovery of a "bee-tree" would cause her to change her mind. The killing of a deer by Jonathan Carney the day before she was due to make a hegira Hennery-wards worked a like result.

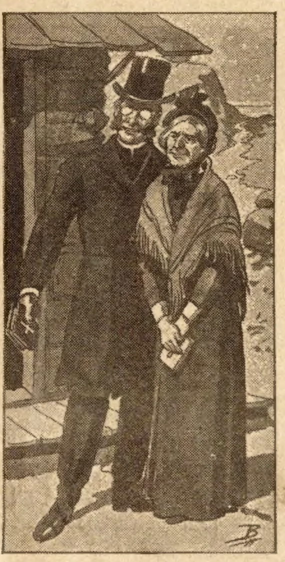
Such little ruses were common enough, but when Mary Jane contrived to break a "limb" one summer under suspicious circumstances, when the "limb" put in three full months "knitting," three months during which Hennery's home knew not his mother, he felt that he had been unjustly dealt with.

"She done it a-purpose, I know she busted it a-purpose," he told his wife.

After such chicanery he felt that any means, however questionable, that he might use in turn, would be permissible. Even to the playing-up of Religion, as it developed.

Hennery was on his way home from Harrisville, where he had been marketing some crossties. His mother was to leave for Mary Jane's on the morrow. How should he contrive to keep her?

He revolved the theory over and over in his mind. How should he contrive to keep her?


"We will walk by the path."

He came in sight of the clapboard-covered shanty where the Reverend Jeremiah Slattery, itinerant evangelist, rested when he was not "laboring in the vineyard."

A thin column of smoke straggled from the stick chimney, proclaiming that the "Reverend" was at home, possibly open for engagement.

Hennery was a Methodist, a Methodist "steward." He took but little stock in the particular dogmas of Slattery's band. Indeed, there are but five thousand people in the whole United States who do take stock in them. Here was the rub! Hennery's mother was one of the five thousand.

In a moment of ecstasy she had succumbed to the arguments of a brother elder of Slattery's years previous. She had been adamantine against the arguments of Hennery, and had clung to her peculiar Faith. Why not profit by her obstinacy?

He stepped quickly from his wagon at Jeremiah's gate and invited the evangelist to "hold a meetin'" at the Lone Elm schoolhouse, of which school district Hennery was a director. He went further. He invited the evangelist to make Hennery's home his headquarters during the meeting.

"I'm a Methodist," said Hennery, "but I'm glad to see the grain garnered in any field."

The "Reverend" thanked his visitor. He accepted with alacrity. The inaction of his bachelor quarters had already begun to pall on him. He longed for the excitement of the contest with the devil. Already he sniffed the smoke of battle from afar.

He gathered his "things" hurriedly into a pasteboard suitcase and crawled into the seat with Hennery. Next morning Mother Appletree announced that she would stay another month, or "as long as the meetin' lasts."

The regularity of the widow's attendance at the meetings put to shame her fellow-sectarians.

Sometimes there was a mere handful of attendants to the exhortations of the Revivalist, and that handful those faithful ones who needed the exhortations to flee from the wrath to come the least. Sometimes the room was packed to suffocation with saint and worldling alike, and the enthusiasm sizzled round the boiling-point, but always the little pensioner with her coarse wisps of gray hair straying from under her black poke-bonnet was in the front pew.

She led the singing, and no matter how loud the boys in the back row might bellow forth the verses of "There'll Be No Dark Valley," or "Some Have Neighbors Over Yonder," you could distinguish her thin but not unpleasant voice in the strain.

The schoolhouse was a half-mile from Hennery's if you went by "the path." If you went by "the road" it was farther. When the attendance from the Appletree family was confined to the minister and the widow, the path was used. They were near the same age. They walked together.

"I don't know how we could get along without your mother," the "Reverend" would say unctuously at the breakfast-table.

"I'm a-gettin' a great blessin', Brother Slattery," she would reply, and Hennery, "wise as serpents," forbore to contradict her, although he was bursting to call to mind some superiority of Methodism to the Slattery doctrines.

Hennery, himself, sat through two or three meetings a week at the schoolhouse, to the no small scandal of his more consistent brethren.

"I'm glad to see the grain garnered in any field," he told his traducers.

When his conscience tried faintly to be heard, he quieted it by mentally "passing the buck" to his sister. "She didn't need to have busted her leg a-purpose."

In the meantime Mrs. Hennery and the little Hennerys, as well as himself, were having biscuit for breaktfast and an abundance of rich gravy at all meals.

The weeks wore on. Mary Jane grew impatient for her turn at the Pension. She came over one Sunday, "to see how the meetin' was gettin' on," she said, although she, too, was a Methodist.

She brought a mess of trout with her, and painted in glowing terms their abundance in Spider River, and the ease with which they responded to the gig in Jonathan's hands.

Hennery read the eagerness which she attempted to hide when she asked: "When be you comin' over, Ma?" and his heart leaped joyfully within him at his mother's answer:

"Not till the meetin' closes."

The meeting was successful enough. There is always a certain proportion of Limestone Countyans ready to respond to the excitement of revivalistic efforts. Last year they answered the Methodist call. Next year they will be ready for Baptist exhortations. In the meantime they fell like ripe grain at the stroke of the Slattery sickle.

There is always a supply of hardened ones ready to be snatched as brands from the burning. There is always a supply of backsliders ready to be won anew to the path. The Reverend Slattery won a goodly share of all three.

Hennery contributed his part, albeit quietly, to keep the meeting going. When the Reverend Mark Hapgood, Methodist, journeyed over from Straney County to see about the wisdom of conducting a rival tent meeting in the community, Hennery discouraged him from the attempt.

There is a corner of the Lone Elm schoolhouse where the wood for religious purposes is stacked. During the Slattery meetings this pile never grew less, but seemed as miraculously replenished as the widow's cruse of oil in the Biblical story. No one ever guessed that it was Hennery who supplied it, hauling it in the dead of night.

Twice Hennery took a horse from necessary farm-work to loan the evangelist for errands.

After the meeting had run for six weeks, Mrs. Carney made another attempt to win her mother to the Carney home. She heralded the opening of a keg of sauerkraut, a delicacy of which the widow was quite fond.

"Not till the meetin' closes," said the widow, determinedly.

"For Heaven's sake, how long is it going to last?" the younger woman asked the minister.

The mother frowned, but the minister answered pleasantly, "As long as the need for it lasts."

Mary Jane was too much huffed to stay for the night, but departed post-haste for Spider River.

"Jonathan is havin' the misery in his back this winter, an' I don't like to leave him alone," she excused herself, but Hennery read between the lines.

"Serves her right," he said to himself. "She didn't need to have busted her leg a-purpose."

All things must end, however. Even successful meetings.

"Three more days," the Revivalist announced one Friday at the breakfast-table, "and we'll wind things up. Brother Sinsabaugh will preach the final sermon and admit the converts to the church on Sunday mornin'."

When that day arrived it found the whole Hennery family ready to attend the meeting en masse.

"Your mother and I will walk by the path," the parson said.

"Very well," said Hennery, and the wagon jolted merrily down the big road.

The old couple had not yet put in their appearance when the wagon arrived at the schoolhouse. Nor yet when the meeting was half over.

"Funniest thing I ever heard of," Hennery said to his wife.

The sermonizing of the Reverend Sinsabaugh was wonderfully dull. The ceremonies of admission were likewise dull. Hennery found himself looking up at the clock many times, also looking at the door for the missing pair.

"Funniest thing I ever heard of," he said again, to Reverend Sinsabaugh, the meeting having closed, "what become of the parson and my mother."

Sinsabaugh wagged his head sagely but noncommittally.

"Strange it is, but doubtless there are reasons."

Perhaps Mary Jane had driven up and abducted the mother. A sense of foreboding settled down on Hennery's spirit. He whipped the team into a trot, although the roughness of the road all but threw the family bodily from the wagon.

"Somethin' must have happened to Ma," he said to his wife repeatedly. "She wouldn't have missed that wind-up for nothin'."

"Must have," admitted the wife, each time.

At last the house was in sight. He threw the lines to one side and dashed through the door. The house was deserted. The fire in the fireplace had gone out.

He looked for the little oilcloth-covered box in which his mother carried her things. It was gone. He looked for the parson's pasteboard suitcase. Gone!

Then his wife called his attention to a piece of paper pinned above the fireplace. He spread it against the wall to decipher. Methodist Steward as he was, he swore.

For the note read:

"Dear Hennery:—when this you see jeremia an' I will hev gon on ouer hunniemoon. we wuz merried just outside the sculhouse this mornin' by the rev mister sinsabau whil the fokes insides was singin' the openin' hym. we will spend a month with jeremia's sister in springfeeld an' then we will set up for ouer selvs at his old bachelor quarters.

"I kinder hate to giv up the penshun but then as jeremia sez the lord will provide.

"you may think it odd for us to run away thissaway but like yung foaks we felt kind uv bashfull about facin you-all so suddent like.

"youer new pap sends luv to you an' mary jane. cum up an' see us soon as we git settled.

"MA."

"Gosh!" Hennery said. "If that wouldn't bang Bannagher!" And then, man-like, he passed the blame on to a woman. "If she hadn't a broke her leg a-purpose, it wouldn't have happened!"

* * *

His Seven Ages.

The seven ages of man have been well tabulated by somebody or other on an acquisitive basis. Thus:

First age—See the earth.

Second age—Wants it.

Third age—Hustles to get it.

Fourth age—Decides to be satisfied with only about half of it.

Fifth age—Becomes still more moderate.

Sixth age—Now content to possess a six-by-two strip of it.

Seventh age—Gets the strip.

* * *

Optimistic.

A firm of notion dealers on the East Side in New York had gone out of business via the Bankruptcy Court, and the attorney for the principal creditors was going through the accounts of the concern.

In the back of the safe he came on a partnership agreement, drawn up by the two bankrupts when they engaged in commerce, and jointly signed by them. The second clause read as follows:

"In the event of failure the profits are to be divided equally."

* * *

Rebuked.

Queen Amelie of Portugal was down at Alton opening a new nurses' home at the Cripples' Hospital. It was when she was visiting that same institution that an amusing incident happened. Bending down to kiss a tiny child, Queen Amelie said to her companion, "What a charming little girl!"

The child looked most annoyed, and, with much dignity, rebuked the Queen. "I is not a little girl; my name is Abraham," he said.

* * *

No Hurry.

While a reporter was telephoning his story from Sing Sing early one morning, a convict hammering on the floor made it hard for him to hear.

"Would you mind stopping for a few minutes?" asked the reporter.

"All right, boss," said the convict, "go to it. I got twenty years to finish this job."

THINK HARD

It Pays to Think About Food.

The unthinking life some people lead often causes trouble and sickness, illustrated in the experience of a lady over in Wis.

"About four years ago I suffered dreadfully from indigestion, always having eaten whatever I liked, not thinking of the digestible qualities. This indigestion caused palpitation of the heart so badly I could scarcely walk up a flight of stairs without stopping to regain breath and strength.

"I became alarmed and tried dieting, wore my clothes very loose, and used other remedies, but found no relief.

"Hearing of the virtues of Grape-Nuts and Postum, I commenced using them in place of my usual breakfast of coffee, cakes or hot biscuit, and in one week's time I was relieved of sour stomach and other ills attending indigestion. In a month's time my heart was performing its functions naturally and I could climb stairs and hills and walk long distances.

"I gained ten pounds in this short time, and my skin became clear and I completely regained my health and strength. I continue to use Grape-Nuts and Postum for I feel that I owe my good health entirely to their use.

"I like the delicious flavour of Grape-Nuts and by making Postum according to directions, it tastes similar to mild high grade coffee." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

The most perfect food in the world. Trial of Grape-Nuts and cream 10 days proves. "There's a Reason."

Look in pkgs. for the little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

By WILL LISENBEE

ABOUT an hour after the Cloverdale Bank of Commerce had closed, and just as Milton Bain, the cashier, was about to leave the bank, Jason Dolliver, the president, came in. He nodded to Bain, and signaling the cashier to follow him, he led the way into his private office. He seated himself at his desk, and pushing an easy chair to Bain, lit a cigar while he fumbled over some papers on his desk.

Dolliver was a short, stout man of sixty. His face was round and full, but expressionless, save for a glint in the dark gray, restless eyes.

Bain was a young man of thirty, with a strong, resolute face and a pair of deep brown eyes that gave evidence of frankness and mental poise.

It was some moments before Dolliver spoke. He was studying the face of the younger man with a close scrutiny.

"Mr. Bain," he said, at length, in a caressing tone, "you have been in this bank about two years?"

Bain nodded. "Two years the first of last month," he said.

"Six months ago, when I bought up a majority of the shares of the stock of the company and took charge of the bank," went on Dolliver, "I was a stranger in this community, but I find I have made no mistake in retaining you in your present position. I saw at once that you knew your business, and was one who could grasp a situation quickly and act promptly."

He paused, still watching Bain's face. But the cashier's impassivity was not disturbed.

"What I mean," pursued the banker, "is that I think you have the qualities necessary to success—courage and self-reliance; that if you saw a chance to make a little deal that would bring quick profits, you wouldn't hesitate. Even good judgment is worthless unless supported by prompt action." He paused a moment, his eyes on the cashier. "What I wish to speak of specifically," he went on," is a little matter I have in mind—something that offers a big profit with scarcely any risk, if we have a mind to accept what the gods provide. Let me illustrate. We have a depositor who is very eccentric. I refer to Mr. Ezra Sparling, a mysterious individual who flits about the country like a shadow. No one seems to know anything about him, his past history, or the source of his wealth, for he does most of his business by mail. Soon after my arrival he made his first deposit. Then came other sums till the total reached the sum of $20,000. Against this he has sent checks to the amount of $5,000. That leaves a balance of $15,000. Mr. Ezra Sparling, as far as any one seems to know, has no relatives. Why, then, should we not fall heir to the balance in the bank?"

He leaned back in his chair and eyed Bain with glittering eyes.

"Why, what do mean?" asked Bain, meeting the other's gaze with a questioning glance. "I don't understand."

Judson Dolliver laughed.

"That is easily explained," he said. "Mr. Ezra Sparling is dead!"

"Dead!" echoed Bain.

"It seems so; and being dead, some one should inherit his fortune, which seems to have been of little use to him. How does it strike you?"

"It strikes me as a very idiotic piece of roguery," replied Bain.

Judson Dolliver laughed. "I half suspected you would say that," he said. "But I think you'll have reasons to change your mind by the time I have explained everything. Mr. Ezra Sparling was lost with some fifty others who met death when the train on the D. & G. Railroad went through the bridge at Snake River. Here is a little clipping from a newspaper that may furnish some additional information." He handed he clipping to Bain, who read:

"Among the passengers on the train who met their death at the Snake River bridge disaster was Ezra Sparling, a rather mysterious character who drifted about the country, never stopping long at any place and seeming to have neither friends nor relatives. He appears to have been a man of wealth, and it was his custom to deposit large sums in the banks at places where he happened to stop. Who he was or what he was—the secret of his life—is now probably hidden forever under the waters of Snake River."

"I see nothing in this," said Bain, "that would have any bearing on the proposition for us to appropriate Mr. Sparling's funds on deposit in the bank."

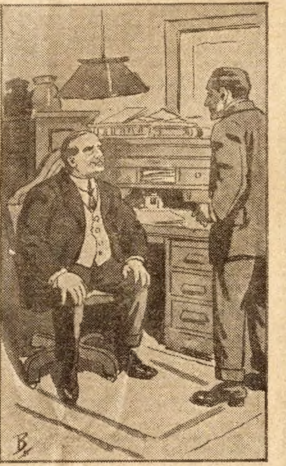
"Let me explain further," insisted the banker. "It is not likely that his money deposited in the Cloverdale bank will ever be called for. But in case this should happen, it will be easy enough to produce a check covering such amount as we desire to take over as our own."

"Do you mean by that to propose that we commit forgery?" asked Bain.

"Oh, well, what's the use of splitting hairs over words? Call it what you will so we get the money."

"Mr. Dolliver," said the cashier, "you really ought to have sufficient sense not to make such a proposition, even if you thought me a rogue. I am amazed that any one could make such a proposition."

"Then you consider yourself too honest or too good to be a party to the scheme?" asked the banker, a sinister smile on his face.


"You cannot prove your charges!"

"I'm afraid I do," replied Bain. "But the best answer I can think of now is my resignation as cashier of the Cloverdale Bank of Commerce."

"Oh, I hardly think you will resign," said the banker, "not at least till I am through with you. I have prepared checks for $12,000 bearing the signature—or what you must accept as the signature—of the late Ezra Sparling. These checks, as you will see, bear dates some weeks previous to the distressing accident that deprived the unfortunate Mr. Sparling of his life. You will see that the signatures are exceedingly well done, and it is doubtful if even Mr. Sparling himself could tell them from his own. Just run your eyes over these and see if I am not correct."

As he spoke he drew forth three checks from a drawer and passed them to Milton Bain, who glanced at them and then placed them in his pocket. Then he glanced at the banker, but said nothing.

"You must pay me the money on those," went on Dolliver, unmoved by the cashier's glance. "And then you shall make the proper entries in the bank's books, with dates to correspond."

"You ought to know that I shall do nothing of the kind," said Bain. "I insist that my resignation be accepted at once, and that is all I have to say."

He rose and started from the room.

"One moment," interposed the banker. "Don't be so fast. I have quite a lot to say yet, and as I dislike talking to myself, I must beg you to remain. I have three other checks here bearing the name of Ezra Sparling. The amounts aggregate $5,000. These are checks which you paid, and you should know if they are genuine."

He rose and held them before Bain's gaze, a malicious light in his eyes.

"Are they genuine?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied Bain. "Otherwise I should not have accepted them."

"Now, that is just what I would have thought, but I happen to know that you signed those checks yourself and received the money for them!"

To this Milton made no reply.

"So you see, my young friend," went on the banker, "I am not wholly ignorant of what is going on here. Knowing you to be guilty of forgery yourself, I did not hesitate to unfold my plan for continuing the business on a larger scale. We are two of a kind, my dear Mr. Bain, and there is no reason why we should not work in harmony."

Milton Bain made an impatient gesture.

"If you please, Mr. Dolliver," he said, "I must ask you not to any further attempt to put me in your class. You are an old man, and I should be foolish to use physical force to stop your mouth."

"You are hardly in position to use any kind of force," replied the banker. "Your bluster and protestations won't save you, and if you make any threats, I'll land you behind the bars!" He was standing very close to Milton, and his clinched fist was thrust out, while his eyes blazed. "You have not asked me for the proof of what I assert, but I'm going to give it. Mr. Baker, the bookkeeper, a man of integrity and unimpeachable, has been a witness to your acts of forgery, and he is ready at any moment to testify to the fact. There is no escape for you, and you must do as I direct."

"You know well enough that I will do nothing of the kind!" cried Bain.

"Then you must take the consequences."

"Very well. Shall we call an officer and let him hear our stories?"

"You are a fool!" blurted out the banker. "What can we gain by being at each other's throats?" I have no desire to make war on you if you show a little common sense."

A smile of contempt hovered about the cashier's lips. Both men had now resumed their seats.

"Before we pursue this subject further," said Bain, "I should like to give you a leaf from the history of a certain man who was cashier of the Drover' Bank in the little town of Fairfield, Nevada."

As Bain uttered the words the banker started violently, then sank back in his seat, a slight pallor coming over his florid face. He moistened his lips with his tongue and tried to speak, but his voice failed him.

"This cashier went by the name of Peter Gluck," went on Bain, "and he became mixed up in some crooked work that made it expedient for him to change his place of residence, and name as well. He now goes by the name of Judson Dolliver!"

"It is an infernal lie!" gasped the banker, his face now livid with rage. "You insulting puppy! I will have you kicked from the bank and placed behind the bars where you belong, you forger and sneak!"

Milton Bain merely shrugged his shoulders.

"I think you will wait at least till I am through with my story," he said. "There was a man in Fairfield by the name of Aaron Riggsby. He was interested in various mines. He deposited in the Drovers' Bank, and there were times

Continued on page eleven.)

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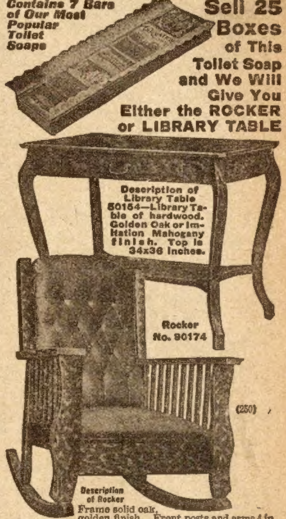
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A Triple Mystery

Or, Longman's Test Case

By Charles Morris Butler

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CHAPTER XI.

ON TO BORDENVILLE.

IN THE morning, after breakfast, Longman took a seat on the hotel veranda, while he smoked a cigar. He had not been seated very long when Miss De Wolfe approached him and sat by his side.

She was dressed in a natty traveling suit of clinging, dark material, trimmed with white and looked like a sensible, business woman.

"Good morning, 'Miss Sinclair,'" said Longman. "Allow me to congratulate you on your early arrival. To my mind, you look far more presentable now than last evening."

"Thanks for the compliment," she answered quietly. "I am going down to Bordenville this morning to see 'Mr. Howe.' What can I say to him That you will have the case dismissed if he will return Smithson his money?"

"I am afraid not, 'Irene'." He seemed to take delight in emphasizing her name. "You are not going to aid me to clear up the matter, then?"

"I am unable to do so. I would gladly pay you five hundred dollars to drop the case, and end the matter. Why won't you be sensible? Five hundred dollars is a whole lot of money—a sum that you can't pick up every day. I promise you I will dissolve partnership with 'Howe' at once, if you will do this. I must free him to protect my own reputation."

"It is too late for me to turn back, even if I wanted to—which I do not. My reputation is at stake. I mean to force a conviction if I can."

"If Smithson refuses to prosecute, 'Howe' will go free."

"Perhaps. Unless I prefer a charge of burglary against him—as I will do. Are you married to Wh-Howe?"

"Yes and no—common law—we've been traveling together for over two years now." She said it unblushingly.

"What do you care for this man? He is only a scoundrel. Sooner or later you and he will get into trouble for fair. In fact I think you are in pretty far now."

"Why? Because I love him! He is the only man who can give me back my good name! You needn't smile, Mr. Detective. I am not as black as I am painted. Besides, he is a money-maker. What was I before he knew me? Only a chorus girl, getting ten or fifteen dollars per, and leading a dog's life. What have we today? The best act in America. Why he is a whole show in himself!"

"Sure, he is a money-maker! But how? A thief and a gambler—a fake hypnotist. And I suppose that you are only a fake mind-reader, too?"

"Maybe I am," she retorted. "I don't lay any claims to be a Svengali or a Miss Fay. But we get the coin!"

"Certainly—the coin— that's the main thing!"

"Ah, cut it out! What's the use? You don't want to understand. You have got to give it to 'Howe.' When we met about ten years ago he was only a street spieler. Sold gold-pointed pens, glue, and stain erasers out of a satchel thrown across three sticks. He used to ballyhoo his own game, eat fire, do card tricks—a sort of Houdini act. Couldn't anybody tie him up with rope but what he could get free. Lock him in a room, and he could pick any lock with a piece of wire. Give him ten minutes, and I believe that he could open any ordinary safe. He put on a magician's act with the 'Giddy Girl's' show I was with. Got to be a regular Herman. Then he wrote a sketch for us two. We faked an Eva Fay act. He studied hypnotism, but wasn't much good at it. Could only hypnotize one or two people out of a dozen. We worked Sans Souci one season."

"With all of his talents it doesn't restrain him from being a common thief, though, 'Miss Sinclair.' I would advise you to cut him adrift. You have told me enough. At his trial I would advise you to testify against him. He is a dangerous man, one who can only get you into trouble—serious trouble. No amount of money would tempt me to let him go free."

"I have told you nothing! What do you mean that I have told you enough?"

"Because you have! You have formed the connecting link and made it possible for me to convict Wharton of crimes which will send him up for years."

"No you won't. I will refuse to testify against him."

"You are not his wife and can be forced to do so."

"He shall marry me, so that I will not be compelled to do so."

" He should do so. Get back your 'good name' you seem so proud of!"

"Here is my last bid," said Miss De Wolfe, soberly. "I will return Smithson's money to him. I will refund Haynes' money to him. Five hundred dollars I believe it was he won from him; and also give you five hundred for yourself. Surely this is better than sending him over the road. If he is convicted neither you nor anybody else will get a cent."

"I told you that I could not be bought, and I can't. Not that I am such an honest man, for I am not; but because I am forced by circumstances to clear up these cases I am on, or never be recognized as a detective." And he explained to her the agreement he had with Jenks. "Your proposition to return Smithson's and Haynes' money would be all right to them, yet it would not cover all the stealings——"

"That's all I know of!" she exclaimed.

"That may be—but that's not all. Though I know you to be an accomplice of his in at least one thing, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt as to you knowing everything in regard to your partner's actions, and I will make you a counter proposition. If you will go to Bordenville and get Wh-'Howe' to write out a confession in full—name all the crimes that he has committed during the last thirty days—and place in my hands funds sufficient to reimburse ALL people he has robbed, I will drop the matter. But I MUST have a written confession to show my superiors and money to cover all losses. A half-confession will NOT do. Understand me?"

"Yes, I understand you. But suppose that he is innocent of any other crimes?"

"We will not anticipate that. I know that he is guilty of at least one more. I am positive of a second right here in Vaughnton, and perhaps one or more in Bordenville. I am going to continue my investigation, because I don't think that he will confess. Tomorrow I will be in Bordenville and will take up the threads there."

"And you will dismiss the case, if he confesses and makes restitution?"

"As far as I am personally concerned, yes, murder excepted. He must take his own chances with the people he has robbed and Sheriff Whitcomb in case that they will not compromise."

"Well, I will tell him what you have said. Allow me to thank you for your consideration of myself. To say the least, after my experience with you last evening, you are a man of very strong character and will power, above bribery and a credit to your calling."

"Thanks, 'Miss Sinclair' for your words of appreciation," responded the detective, "take my advice and break away from your companion. He will only lead you into evil. Good day."

After the arrival and departure of the train, the telegraph operator brought Longman an answer from Haynes. It read:

"Combination never changed. Barstow perfectly reliable. Have known him for years. What do you mean?

"W. T. Haynes."

Longman read and reread the telegram. He shook his head and mumbled to himself. "I see no glimmer of light as yet," he mused. "The case is too complicated. My only hope is to get a tangible clew. There are too many people involved, and any one of them may be guilty: Barstow, young Haynes, Smithson, Miss Haynes—oh! pshaw! And the most reasonable person to suspect is Wharton—and what of Miller? It's like groping in the dark, seeking to find a needle in a haystack. I'll finish with Miller and get down to Bordenville."

Longman went down to the general store. He nodded to young Barstow, who was busily engaged in stamping and assorting the mail which had just arrived. Miss Killmer met him at the door and escorted him into Mr. Miller's private office.

Miller was working over his books, but left them immediately upon the detective's entrance. "What did you find out?" he asked eagerly.

"Nothing much," answered the detective. "So far I have nothing to work on but conjecture."

"What do you advise doing? Do you think it advisable to arrest Barstow?"

"You can prefer charges against him, I presume," responded the detective quietly. "Many an innocent man has been convicted on less evidence. But I don't think that you could hold him, guilty or innocent. He is well-known here; he has a clean past, as far as I can judge; and I am satisfied that an impartial judge will give him the benefit of the doubt. I am afraid that you will have to drop that line of prosecution at present."

"What did he have to say of me?" Adolph asked pointedly.

"Nothing. But what I can judge from your own talk, if you will allow me to speak candidly——"

"Go on, you can't hurt my feelings. I may as well know the horrible truth at once!" He laughed mirthlessly.

"What I have to say is of a personal matter and may offend you."

"I'll run the chances."

"It appears that both you and Barstow are in love with the same girl."

"What's that got to do with the case?" Miller demanded, sharply.

"Only this: you are both blinded with love and jealousy, and to such an extent that neither is capable of correctly analyzing the motives of the other—or giving the other man a fair deal."

"Go on! I see you have been won over to the other side!"

"You wrong me, Mr. Miller," continued Longman, quietly. "I know I am treading on dangerous ground. Yet I want to say my say in my own way, because I feel that I am in the right. You have nothing against Barstow but the fact that he has the combination of your safe. You must have considered him trustworthy in the first place or he would not have had it. Candidly now, outside of the fact that he is courting Miss Killmer, have you any reason to believe that he has forfeited your confidence?"

"He spends more than he earns," doggedly replied the merchant.

"That's an open question and one hard to prove. On the other hand, Barstow feels that you have trumped up this charge against him to get him out of the way. You see my point don't you?"

"Certainly, that has been his contention all the time. That's why you are here to clear up the mystery."

"I doubt that I can do it in an intelligent manner. You alone know positively whether there was a robbery or not—pardon the insinuation. I do not, anyhow. I only have your word for it."

"Well, there was! Believe me, there was!"

"Granted. Then let me eliminate, for a moment, both Barstow and yourself from the possibility of being implicated. I do not say he is not or could not be guilty, and that you could not be."

"Why, do you intimate that I could be?" Miller demanded.

"Barstow says that you were seen in the office about 9 o'clock on the evening of the robbery."

"I deny it; positively deny it. Even if I were, that would not prove anything. I have a right to come and go as I please. But I can prove that I was in Dr. Thompson's office all evening having my teeth fixed."

"And you had no occasion to visit the office afterwards?"

"No reason whatever."

"Not even to get money to pay for the work done?"

"I had sufficient change in my purse to meet the obligation."

"We'll take it for granted that you did not return, though Barstow claims that you were seen in the office by himself and the barber. My theory is that some one made up to look like you entered the store and stole the money. Are you acquainted with a man by the name of Wharton?"

"You mean the performer?"

"Yes."

"I met him twice. He tried to rent the opera house from me to give an entertainment. I put the price up pretty high because I was not particularly stuck on his kind of a show. Hypnotism and that kind of acts do not appeal to me. There is something horribly devilish about the whole thing."

"I agree with you—and about the man also. The last time you met him, I believe, was on the day of the robbery?"

"Your information is correct. Why do you ask?"

Frank laughed. "How do I get any information? By observation, splicing

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the little insignificant things together. Why do I ask?, Because I have every reason to believe that he is implicated in this robbery. I am more than positive that he robbed Haynes. He is a known crook, a gambler and a very unreliable and untrustworthy person. At present I am only suspicious of him. When I go down to Bordenville, if I find there the same evidence that I have found here and in Lewiston, I am satisfied that I can weave a chain of evidence around him that will convince any jury of his guilt. By the way, where did you meet him? Anything unusual about it?"

"No, nothing unusual. Barstow introduced him and I talked to him right here in my office where I transact most of my private business."

"Was the vault door open then, same as now?"

"Certainly, it's open all day long, especially when either Herman or I are here."

"And the safe could be seen open?"

"Assuredly. By jove! Longman, I believe you are on the right track. Do you know that Wharton told me he was a 'handcuff king' or something like that. And if locked in a room, could pick any lock and get out. Said that he was a mind-reader, and by the aid of his partner, could tell the number of a watch or any set of figures which would be written down. I wonder if he could 'guess' a combination to a safe?"

"So I am given to understand. That is not an uncommon faculty some people have."

"Do you think a man with hypnotic powers could hypnotize a man against his will—that is, unknown to the subject?" asked Miller.

"Anything is probable," answered Longman, strangely interested. "I am not well enough informed on the subject to be an authority. Statements have been made to this effect in law, but science does not so recognize it generally. Personally I think it is a fact. Wharton I don't think strong enough to do this. He is a faker in many ways. For instance, to do his mind-reading act, he blinds Miss De Wolfe, and handles the article; by an elaborate system of keys or hints given in conversation he communicates the name or number of the article to her. I don't think it a case of thought transmission at all. It isn't mind-reading, but word-juggling, and unless he talked and gave the key, Miss De Wolfe could not carry on her work. Hence I cannot credit him with sufficient hypnotic power to create an influence other than voluntary. Have you any special reason for asking?"

"No-o, not exactly. Your speaking of Wharton brought it up. I am strangely affected by the thought of hypnotism. Of course, if you can connect Wharton with my robbery, this will let Barstow and me out?"

"Sure!"

"Then I hope you do. Perhaps I have been prejudiced against him. You say you are going down to Bordenville?"

"Yes, on the next train. I don't see as how I can be of any further use here."

"Well, I wish you success. It's a nasty feeling to think you can't trust your employes—especially one you can't get rid of."

"Oh! It will all come out right in the end."

"Tell Whitcomb to send in his bill, when you see him. I'll pay it. Goodbye," and Frank took his leave.

As Frank left the office he was met by Barstow. "Anything new?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Frank.

"Did Miller admit that he returned to the store on the night of the robbery?"

"He asserts positively that he did not. You must have been mistaken."

"Not on your life! Come on with me to the barber shop. I want to prove to you that I am correct."

"I don't know what good it will do, but I'll go just out of curiosity. Take my advice, Barstow, and dismiss from your mind the idea that Miller is trying to put up a job on you. Better take it for granted there was a robbery and set your wits together to discover who the guilty party is."

"I wish I could, but somehow I can't help but think that it was only a bunco game, and that I am the one to get the worst of it."

Entering the barber shop, Frank was introduced to the barber.

"Larson, you remember that I was in your shop on the evening of June 17th?"

"Was you? I don't remember dates. Oh, you mean the night we saw Adolph Miller come out of the store? I believe you told me not to forget the circumstances."

"Why did he suggest that?" wondered the detective. "Did he anticipate something?"

"That's right," said Barstow. "So you will see that I was correct, Longman!"

"No doubt about it! But that proves nothing. Better let it drop. It is a bad matter at its best. I'm going down to Bordenville and will keep you posted if I find out anything new."

But Frank did not let the matter drop. Still he could not piece his clews together in such a manner as to convince himself who was guilty. He was absolutely at a standstill.

CHAPTER XII.

GROPING IN THE DARK.

A SHORT time after Longman's arrival in Bordenville, he was closeted with Sheriff Whitcomb. The sheriff looked like anything but what he was. He was dressed in a suit of ordinary blue with no distinctive marks to indicate that he was other than a plain business man. But Longman was convinced that he had to deal with a very shrewd and secretive man.

The meeting took place in the sheriff's office in the County Building. Frank presented his credentials and was soon conversing animatedly, giving the sheriff an outline of the progress he had made.

"You have done as well as could be expected, in arresting Wharton," the sheriff said, in summing up the evidence. "But I hardly think you can convince a jury of Wharton's guilt. If you had him down in Chicago you might do something with the 'third degree.' We cannot countenance such methods in Borden County."

"He may confess here," replied Longman. "You don't think there is anything to the other clews, then?"

"Yes and no. Too many possibilities with the Haynes case. By the way, I got a letter from Haynes suggesting we drop the case. He said you had written him about young Barstow. Barstow's father, you must know, married a sister or cousin of Haynes. It would not do to bring home this crime or suspicion upon a member of the family, unless you can get the actual goods on them. You would start a family feud in about five minutes. That's the worst of these small towns, people are all related in some way and the interests of one are made the interests of all. That is the main reason that I sent for an outside man. We can go over and see Jones & Co. just as a matter of courtesy to show them that I haven't forgotten them, and we can also see Dr. Wright. I hardly think you can connect either Barstow or Wharton with these crimes. I wouldn't be surprised if they all turned out to be separate and distinct. I am not going to burden you with my theory. Go on your own hook, but don't arrest anybody until you communicate with me. How are you on expense money?"

"I have enough at present," responded the detective, somewhat taken back at the sheriff's way of looking at things.

He could see his test case crumbling. Ruin stared him in the face. He resolved then and there NOT to drop the case even if he had to work on his own hook and on his own expense money. He, at least, was not ready to give up. He would not give up! It was this dogged, stick-to-itive quality that made Frank Longman what he was: a winner against odds.

"Have you any objection to telling me what kind of trouble Wharton got into here?"

"Plain gambling, disturbing the peace. I ran him out of town."

"When was this?"

"Only about a week ago. He came down here to show, but was unable to get the theater as it was being used as a moving-picture house. Then he went over to Fitzgerald's saloon and got mixed up with a bunch of guinnies who were celebrating payday on the railroad. Sprang a card game on them and fleeced them out of their money. When my man tried to arrest him he either hypnotized him or chloroformed him and left him tied up in a corner, while the whole gang got gloriously drunk. Wharton was fined and made to jump out of town."

"Was he in town during the robberies here?"

"Don't think so. Think he was in Kaslovia in the next county."

"Don't you know for sure?"

"No, I was down in Lewiston and Vaughnton about that time."

"You haven't anything further to say?"

"No, but I think you ought to have fifty dollars more for expenses. Have a good time while you can. I believe that's about all you'll get out of it! You can make a report to me in writing when you get ready to return so that I can make a report of it in my bill of expenses. The mere fact that you came down here will show that I am trying to protect the residents of my county."

Frank felt like throwing the roll of bills in Whitcomb's face. To think that he had been brought down here to help build the sheriff's political fences! If he had not had that bet on with Jenks, he might look at it in a different manner. It was a case of "root, hog, or die" with him as it was. Like a thirsty wanderer lost on the desert, he must push on, follow the mirage, though disaster would finally be his reward.

So he hung on to the extra fifty dollars and with the sheriff went over to Jones & Co., the druggists, and interviewed Mr. Jones. After introducing Frank, Whitcomb left the detective with the merchant.

"You can visit Dr. Wright alone," the sheriff said, genially. "I have got to be in Lewiston tomorrow on business."

"I have been informed that you have been robbed lately. I am not acquainted with the details of the case, will you kindly enlighten me?" asked the detective.

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed the druggist, "you don't mean to tell me that Whitcomb sent down to Chicago for a man to work on my case?" and the druggist laughed boisterously. "If that ain't the limit!"

"He must have thought it agreeable to you or else he would not have done so. What is there funny about it?"

"'Twasn't worth while to bring in outside talent. So little involved," and again the druggist laughed.

"Remember I know nothing about it," said the detective surprised. "When did it happen? What was lost?"

"Just five days ago I discovered my loss. My cash register was robbed of about twenty dollars and while other things may have been taken, at this time I only miss five one-pound cans of ether. Nothing to mourn about."

"You lost no cigars, or more valuable drugs, opium or morphine or cocaine?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"How did you come to notice your loss? Did the twenty dollars represent all the cash in the register?"

"Not by a jugful! I had in the neighborhood of a hundred."

"Wouldn't it be possible that you made a mistake in giving out change—substituted a twenty for a two, for example?"

"Hardly. Money is too hard to get to do such fool tricks."

"You have every confidence in your clerks?"

"Absolute."

"Still mistakes happen, you know," replied the detective, chagrined. "How did you come to notice the loss of one kind of medicine out of the thousands you have in stock?"

"I had a call for it, and when I came to get it, it was gone."

"But you have no exact means of knowing just when it was taken? Might have been gone for week, couldn't it?"

"In this case it just happens that I can fix the date exactly. Otherwise I might think it had been sold."

"How do you fix the date?"

"On the night of the robbery I was suffering with an aching tooth and had the gums lanced. When I was leaving the office, the dentist asked me if I had any ether in stock as he desired to purchase some. At that time I did not know if I had any or not. I went back to the store and investigated. I used a few drops of chloroform on my tooth and counted the cans of ether. My tooth did not stop aching, so I went back and had it pulled. The next day the dentist came in for his ether and it was gone."

"Pretty conclusive proof that you had it all right. But I'll be damned if I can see how I can trace a can of ether. Who would want ether badly enough to steal it?"

"I don't know who would want it badly enough to steal it—somebody stole it all right. There are many persons who use ether. Doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons, dyers, makers of explosives. I often have calls for chloroform from tender-hearted people who want to kill off diseased or mutilated pets. Showmen stupefy ferocious beasts by the use of ether, so that they can be made to perform tricks or so that tamers can enter their dens without fear of being torn limb from limb. I sold some once to an animal trainer."

"You might add that housebreakers might want it to stupefy human beings they wanted to rob. It would be hard to trace the cans, however, unless you had some private mark of identification upon them," said the detective, who was thoroughly disgusted with the whole thing by now.

"You will find my private price mark on each can, if that's all you need," laughed the druggist.

"I don't know if that will do any good or not," responded the detective, "but you may tell me what it is. You use figures or letters? What's the price and where will I find the mark?"

"I use letters to denote cost, and figures for the selling price, which is never a secret, and is usually marked on the outside of the package or on the label if goods are unwrapped. In the case of this ether, as there is no paper label on the can, the design being embossed in the tin, the cost mark is scratched on the bottom with a pin." Mr. Jones here referred to his wholesale druggists' list. "The cost is HEZ—or $1.40. I am not

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sure I have the selling price on the cans. If I have it will be $5-2; which means $5 to a layman or one-half of $5 if sold to a doctor."

It was Frank's turn to laugh. "Quite a scheme. But this HEZ, are those the same figures that are used by your wholesaler? Couldn't some other firm use the same mark?"

"No, those are my own figures or characters. It would be a remarkable coincidence if any other firm put the same value on them that I do. Each firm has a different code. For instance, a might represent 1, b 2, etc., or a, e, i, o, u, w, x, y, z, 1 to 9. In my case I spell system 'Zystim'. Then to avoid using M as a cipher mark, I give value to the letters as follows:

"Have Zystim
'1234 098765.'

"You can thus see where I get HEZ for $1.40."

The subject of price and code was evidently a hobby of Mr. Jones' and he seemed to take pleasure in demonstrating it to Longman.

"You have succeeded in evolving a code which would be hard to decipher, and establishing a mark of identification hard to dispute in case that you could get your eyes on the cans."

"If we only could!" said the druggist. "That little 'if' means a whole lot. In fact it is the largest word in the dictionary."

"I have very little hope of solving the riddle. Still crime has been detected through less evidence than what is before us. How many cans were there in the original lot?"

"One dozen."

"And you disposed of seven. To whom?"

"Three to the Monroe Pharmacy, and I think three were used by physicians at the accident we had in the stone quarry. Several people were injured in a premature explosion. I furnished a large part of the supplies used in patching up the wounded."

"That leaves one can to be accounted for."

"I think it was purchased by Dr. Forsythe, I'm not sure."

"There should be no full cans of ether anywhere, with your mark on them save at the Monroe Pharmacy or at Dr. Forsythe's, in case that he has not used any of his? Am I correct?"

"There were no marks on the Monroe cans. I gave him three cans out of my original shipment. We sometimes buy in cahoots. I think he still has the three cans. I was over to see him the other day to find out if I could get a can for Dr. Thompson in case he still wanted it, and I am pretty sure that he said that he had not sold any."

"If you will kindly point out to me Dr. Wright's office I will pay that gentleman a visit," said the detective.

"Why Dr. Wright?" asked the druggist in a startled tone. So different that Frank looked at him rather queerly.

"Just a matter of business; I assure you I have no teeth to pull."

"I wouldn't advise you to go to him if you had," replied Mr. Jones. "He's a butcher, and would soak the life out of you when it came to prices."

Frank was surprised. Ordinarily druggists, doctors and dentists are on good terms. If not, professional etiquette would restrain each from "knocking" the other. The detective felt that there was bad blood between the two. He did not choose to continue the subject further, and changed the topic.

"By the way, Mr. Jones, do you know a young man by the name of George Barstow?" It was just a random question. Frank hardly realized that he had asked it.

"You mean the postal clerk in Vaughnton?"

"Yes."

"Certainly. He worked for me some time ago. His folks lived here in Bordenville about seven or eight years ago."

'So? Bright young man," said Frank, surprised.

"I didn't see anything bright about him. Careless as the devil. I was glad when he left me. Carried away the key to my front door. Never got it back, either. I wrote to him about it and he claimed that he left it with me."

"He was trustworthy, wasn't he?" The detective was getting interested.

"As far as I know. I don't think that he would steal anything. Any reason for asking?"

"Not exactly. I met him in Vaughnton and had a chat with him."

"He was down here the other day," added the druggist. "He wanted me to head a petition to get him appointed postmaster here. What do you think of that for nerve? He had a falling out with Miller, over what I don't know. I told him if he had a job to hang on to it and leave politics alone."

"Peculiar kind of business man," thought Longman to himself. "Hasn't got a good word for anybody. He's overburdened with a grouch against the whole world. Even his laugh is artificial." But he said nothing. His attention was attracted to the entrance by a woman who was talking rather animatedly to the drug clerk at the toilet accessories counter. He looked again. It turned out to be Miss De Wolfe.

She saw him about the same time and bowed. Later she approached him. "Where are you stopping?" she asked.

"Borden House," he answered.

"I'll see you after supper," she said in a low tone. "I think I can get him to do what you suggested!"

"So? I'm glad to hear it."

"See you later!" And she tripped out of the store in a hurried manner.

"Know her?" asked Jones.

"Slightly," answered Longman. "Do you?"

"I met her once before in company with her husband—or the man she travels with. Wanted to rent my opera house. I was glad that I refused them. A precious pair of scoundrels."

"So I'm given to understand. Was Wharton in here the night of the robbery?" he asked very innocently.

"I believe that it was the same night."

"Where did you meet him?"

"Right here."

"As close to the register as I am now?"

"Closer, perhaps. You don't infer——?"

"Oh, not exactly. Even if I did that would hardly account for your ether."

"Of course not. But that would account for the twenty dollars."

"But we couldn't prove it!"

"Hardly."

"How many people have keys to your store?" asked the detective, as a happy thought struck him.

'There's myself, my clerk and Dr. Forsythe."

"Why Dr. Forsythe?" asked Longman.

"He is the 'Co.' part of the firm. I let him have a key so that, if needs be, he can come in in the night and fill a prescription without waking me up. I live over on the hill and we have no night clerk."

"I see! Now wouldn't it be possible that Dr. Forsythe took the money and used the ether unbeknown to you?"

"I thought of that, and asked him," responded the druggist. "He says not, and I am forced to believe him."

"You have no reason to doubt him?"

"Not in the least. He founded this business. While my name is over the door, he is really the head of the institution."

"And the clerk?"

"His son."

"This accounts for the three keys. We must look elsewhere for a solution," said Frank. He hated to add what he had in his mind, though it was uppermost. "And about the key lost by Barstow? It could have been found and used!"

"My idea exactly," responded the druggist. "Or, what is more to the purpose, was never lost and used! You get my inference, don't you?"

It was right here that Frank Longman spliced a strong chain of circumstantial evidence against George Barstow. It was a fact beyond dispute that Barstow had the combination of Haynes' safe, also a key to the door, and was in Lewiston on the night of the robbery. It was also a fact that he had the combination of Miller Brothers' safe and free access to the store, and was in Vaughnton on the night of the robbery. Here now was a third coincidence. He now had, or at least did have at one time, the key to Jones' store, and was in Bordenville on the night of the day of the robbery. It looked dark for the young man. Men have been hung on less evidence than here presented.

"Excuse me, Mr. Jones, I understand your inference, but I must refrain from commenting on it. Do you know Adolph Miller of Vaughnton?" Frank asked by way of diversion.

"One of the best friends I have," answered the druggist, coloring up.

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Within ten days. Why do you ask?"

"Did he say anything to you in regards to a strange happening in his store?"

"I am not at liberty to say."

"Did he suggest anything to you?"

"I don't know what you mean," evaded the druggist.

"You have a right to keep anything back that you want to," replied the detective, who was satisfied that Jones knew about the robbery. "Does he know of your robbery?"

The druggist was silent for a moment. "Perhaps he does," he finally said. "Let us terminate the interview. As I said before, my loss is insignificant. I am satisfied to let the matter drop. Whitcomb was a fool to mix himself up with the metropolitan police. Nothing but trouble will come out of this business." He walked away.

Another set-back! Always when it came to a certain point the interested parties wanted to drop the case. On his part he could not understand it. Was George Barstow guilty or was there a plot against him somewhere?

"I must keep my head. I must not make a mistake. It looks like Barstow—then what of Wharton? Everything hinges on my getting a confession or finding the ether cans. I wonder what it was Wharton doped me with in the Lewiston Hotel? Was it ether?"

A new idea in his head, Longman walked out of the drug store.

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His Fishing Suit.

"Hubby," said young Mrs. Wombat brightly, "I think I'll give away your old winter suits. You'll never wear them again."

"Quite true, my dear. In fact, you might sell them, and thus earn a little pin money for yourself."

"No; I have tried that at various times with father's old clothing. The prices you get from old clothes men are not worth considering. Fifty cents for a suit that cost $40 is ridiculous. Such a suit would mean much to the janitor or to one of the elevator boys. They run a great many errands for me, and I prefer to see them get the benefit."

"I think you are right, my love," assented Mr. Wombat, indulgently. "But, by the way——"

"Yes?"

"I wish you would save me one of those suits for a fishing suit when we go away this summer."

"Very well.'

"One of those winter suits will not be too heavy, as it gets quite cold in Maine."

"You are right. I'll save out a good suit and brush it nicely."

The suit was indeed nicely brushed and folded when Mr. Wombat came home that afternoon. He examined it and smiled.

"Did you give away all the other suits, my dear?" he inquired.

"Yes, but I saved the best for your fishing suit. It's your old dress suit, dear. What's the matter?" she added, as she noticed Mr. Wombat's somewhat wry smile. "Isn't it the thing for fishing?"

"Just the thing for fishing," declared Mr. Wombat, as he bore it away. "I always fish in a dress suit, pet."—Judge.

* * *

A Handy Man.

A colonel wanted a man-servant, so he inserted an advertisement in the local weekly. One of the applicants who answered was an Irishman.

"What I want," explained the Colonel, "is a useful man—one who can cook, drive a motor, look after a pair of horses, clean boots and windows, feed poultry, milk the cow, and do a little painting and paperhanging."

"Excuse me, sor," said Murphy, "but what kind of soil have ye here?"

"Soil?" snapped the Colonel. "What's that got to do with it?"

"Well, I thought if it was clay I might make bricks in me spare time.'

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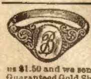

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Playing With Fire

(Continued from page seven.)

when he had as much as fifty thousand dollars in the bank. He was rather careless in his business transactions, and when he died suddenly of heart disease, his affairs were in a bad shape. When his affairs were settled up it was found that, instead of his having $30,000 deposited in the bank, as was supposed, there was a balance of but $20,000, and checks were still in the bank to show that the bank's account was correct. But the trouble was, Mr. Riggsby's bank book had disappeared. An examination of the checks was made, and three of them, aggregating $10,000, were declared to be forgeries. Then it was that Peter Gluck, the cashier, disappeared, and it was later discovered that he had not only committed forgery, but had looted the bank so that it closed its doors, a complete wreck. The loss of the money, which was a severe blow to my mother, left her almost penniless. That was fifteen years ago. It is a long time to wait for justice. But I think it has arrived, Mr. Dolliver, or Gluck, or whatever you desire to call yourself, I want you to pay that ten thousand dollars to my mother."

Judson Dolliver sank back in his chair, his face pallid, his lips twitching.

"You cannot prove your charges!" he said at length, breathing hard. "How dare you—you a forger—a rascal—how dare you defy me?"

"Because I have committed no forgery," replied Bain, calmly.

"Then you deny signing these checks?"

"I do not. I had a right to sign them, for the money was mine."

"Yours?" gasped Dolliver.

"Yes, mine," answered Bain. "I am Ezra Sparling—that is, I had my money deposited under that name."

Dolliver was staring helplessly at the cashier.

"What sort of a cock-and-bull story is this?" he demanded.

"The simple truth. Soon after you came to Cloverdale I received a legacy of $25,000 from the estate of an uncle. Just about that time, and after you had taken your place as president of the bank, I made the discovery that you were the missing Peter Gluck who had wrecked the Drovers' Bank and disappeared. It then occurred to me that it might be a very difficult matter to establish your identity or even convict you before a jury under the circumstances, so I decided to wait for developments. I knew in reason that you would be up to some of your old tricks. After consulting with my lawyers, we laid a trap for you, and my money was deposited in the bank under the name of Ezra Sparling. Later we had the paragraph printed in a paper giving an account of Sparling's death. How our plan to trap you worked, you can judge for yourself. In the meantime we have not been idle in tracing your movements since quitting Nevada, and you can do nothing by trying to bluff. Besides, I have three forged checks in my pocket."

The face of Judson Dolliver was ghastly. His voice shook as he spoke, and he leaned on the desk for support.

"I suppose I shall have to give up the fight," he said. "I am in a corner where I can't get out. Listen: Don't make any move to have me arrested just yet. I am a rich man now, and can square everything, every cent of the money lost by the Drovers' Bank and all claims against me. Give me this chance, and then if the parties interested wish to prosecute me, they can do so. Send for your lawyers, and we'll talk the whole matter over."

"Al right," replied Bain. "We'll do that and see what is best to be done."

And the two left the bank together.

ACTRESS TELLS SECRET

A Well Known Actress Tells How She Darkened Her Gray Hair and Prompted Its Growth With a Simple Home Made Mixture.

Miss Blanche Rose, a well-known actress, who darkened her gray hair with a simple preparation which she mixed at home, in a recent interview at Chicago, Ill., made the following statement: "Any lady or gentleman can darken their gray hair and make it soft and glossy with this simple recipe, which they can mix at home. To a half pint of water add 1 oz. of bay rum, a small box of Barbo Compound, and 1/4 oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Apply to the hair twice a week until it becomes the required shade. This will make a gray haired person look 20 years younger. It is also fine to promote the growth of hair, relieves itching and scalp humors and is excellent for dandruff and falling hair."

Precautions.

The conversation at a recent social function in Trenton turned to the extreme precautionary methods of some people, and the Governor-elect told of the rule laid down by a certain fellow native along that line.

One day while in the city, the Governor said, the fellow Jerseyman happened to collide with a bunch of hygienics, and among other things they referred to the water supply of his home town.

"It isn't as good as it might be," said the Jerseyman, when questioned as to its quality. "There is something like 10,000,000 microbes to a drop, but it is the best we can do at present."

"What do you do to safeguard yourself against water of that kind?" queried one of the hygienics, with a look of concern. "You surely take some precautionary measures!"

"Oh, yes," smiled the Jerseyman. "First we filter the water and then we boil it, and then we drink applejack."

* * *

Wary.

A woman, wearing an anxious expression, called at an insurance office one morning.

"I understand," she said, "that for five dollars I can insure my house for a thousand dollars in your company."

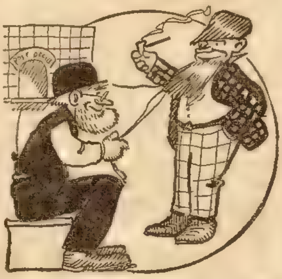
"Yes," replied the agent, "that is right. If your house burns down we pay you one thousand dollars."

"And," continued the woman, anxiously, "do you make any inquiries as to the origin of the fire?"

"Certainly," was the prompt reply; "we make the most careful inquiries, madam."

"Oh!"—and she turned to leave the office—"I thought there was a catch in it somewhere."

* * *



Farmer Sproggins (reading)—"Here's a feller, out West, et a fifteen pound turkey, six loaves o' bread, two pounds o' butter, a quart o' cranberry sass and two mince pies at one setting."

Farmer Joggins—"That's nuthin'! Deacon Poggins will eat more'n that at the minister's donation party."

* * *

His Error.

"I don't reckon I'll ever get to understand girls," volunteered the young barber, as he twisted Robbinbun's nose into a position of safety.

"That will be unfortunate for the girls," said his victim.

"I believe you! There's half a dozen girls I might have married if I'd only understood them."

"And as you did not understand them I presume they're all single?"

"No, they're all married!"

"Please keep your mind on your work, and do not look so ferocious. I don't want my head removed."

"The first one of them was a queen! I would have hooked up with her all right—only I didn't understand her."

"Go on, you interest me strangely."

"She was a swell looker! Big eyes, teeth, lips—why, this one even had pretty elbows."

"A paragon, indeed!"

"Nope, a Presbyterian. You never seen such a thirst for information. I took her to all the ball games, and she just ate up the base ball dope and wanted more. I carried base ball history to her house by armfuls. I give her the whole history of the three leagues, the family history of every player, and his battin' average. Believe me, I give that dame some education. Then I happened to mention horse racing and she set up and took immediate notice, and I read her the history of every plug, harness and saddle, and their record, from Adam's time. She just fattened on it. Then she got interested in dogs."

"Began to warm up to you, eh?"

"I believe you! And automobiles! When I got through with her she knew every car that had ever won——"

"To make a long story short, you did not marry her?"

"Nope, I didn't understand her. I educated that girl. Everything she knows I learned her. I thought I had her ready to eat off my hand, when her brother brought a guy home with him one evening whilst I was settin' there, and it was all off."

"Did he throw you out?"

"Nothin' like that. He shook both her hands and said: 'My! My! Whoever would have thought a scrub like Jack could have such a stunnin' sister! I'll bet you designed that gown yourself! You certainly do look charmin'! I tell you it takes an artist to know how to wear clothes!'"

"Was he right?"

"I s'pose so; I hadn't never noticed that. But, say, I used to think she was hungry for the stuff I'd been givin' her, but you should have seen the greedy thing inhale what he was feedin' her! She didn't know when I went home."

"Do you think it was altogether his line of conversation that did it?"

"What else could it have been?"

"Maybe a combined odor of onions and cigarette smoke was distasteful to her."

"I never et onions or smoked cigarettes when I was goin' callin'. I knew what is due to a lady. On them nights I confined myself to garlic and Swiss cheese, and smoked nothin' but my meerschaum."

* * *

Signals.

"Can anybody tell me," demanded Fatridge, "why children who are only ordinarily bad as a general rule turn in and do their very worst whenever there are guests in the house?

"Even in so simple a matter as sitting in chairs they do all they can to make things uncomfortable for everybody.

"A child will never sit on a chair if it can be helped as a general thing, but let callers drop in and all is changed.

"Now, the other day some people dropped in to sit on our porch with us a while. There were not enough chairs to go around, so I had to go into the house and carry out more. The children in the visiting party all had to have chairs, and our own kids had to have chairs because the guests did, and I was busy dragging chairs out of the house for half an hour.

"I suggested that they sit on the porch steps or play on the lawn. But they all refused to play on the lawn until I had dragged out chairs for them. As soon as I had accomplished that they all rushed away and left them vacant.

"It is the same at the table, only worse. If there are guests for a meal and any particular thing in the eating line is rather scarce, the children invariably ask for it the second time, although they may not eat it at all at other times. There'll be an empty plate dangling right before my eyes every time I look up."

"You should give them an F. H. B. signal," said Wizun.

"What's that?"

"Well, it is something like the S. O. S. signal that ships give when in distress. The F. H. B. signal is domestic, as important in the home as S. O. S. is on the seas, and it ought to be responded to with the same speed."

"What does F. H. B. stand for?"

"'Family hold back.' It has often saved the day, and it does away with a lot of awkward kicks and winks."

"I'm afraid our children wouldn't pay much attention to F. H. B."

"Try it, anyway. You can make up others if you like, such as A. B., 'Apply brakes,' or G. S. O. B., 'Go slow on bread.'"

"And where are the guests while these cipher messages are being sent? Are they supposed to go into a trance?"

"Sure! Guests are supposed to be deaf and blind. How many whisperings have you pretended not to hear? And how many signs have you pretended not to see when you have been a guest?"

"Besides when you get N. M. B. you have something definite—'No more butter.' You know exactly what is meant, whereas the old-fashioned frownings and winks convey nothing but a vague uneasiness, a premonition of you know not what."

* * *

Hadn't Specified.

"There, lad, 'tis a bonnie lass you've married, and I wish you both joy," said the old minister, as he gazed at the beaming faces of the young couple he had just united.

"You're getting to the end of all your troubles now," he added encouragingly to the groom.

Time went on, as time will, and a few months later the old minister met the young fellow who had started matrimony with such a smiling face.

"You look pretty miserable, my friend," said he.

"Well I might," came the sulky answer. "I thought you told me in the church as 'ow I'd got to the end of all my troubles."

"Ah, so I did, lad," said the minister, with a glimmer in his eye, "but I didn't say which end!"

* * *

More Than Full.

A little girl had sent back her plate for chicken two or three times, and had been helped bountifully to all the other rich things that go to make a good dinner. Finally she was observed looking rather disconsolately at her unfinished plate of pudding.

"What's the matter, Dora?" asked Uncle John. "You look mournful."

"That's just the matter," said Dora, "I am more'n full."

Then she wondered why everybody laughed.

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He Got His.

"I love you," said the flippant youth. "Do you get me?"

"No, I do not get you. I wouldn't have you," retorted the sensible girl.

Be Chums.

Husbands, be on your guard!
A wife does not prefer
The kind that works so hard
He has no time for her.

RAGLAN ROGER'S HALLOWEEN

Little Brother Knew.

Little Brother—"Bet he'd kiss you if I weren't here!"

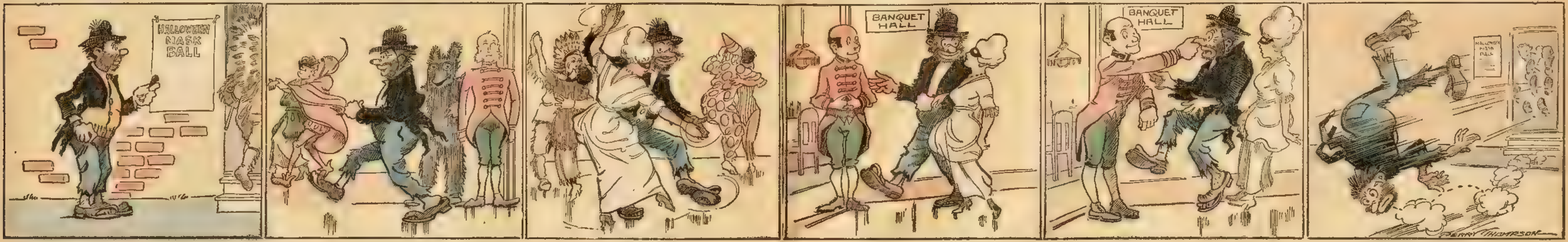
Sister—"You insolent boy! Go away this very minute."

One On the Boss.

Boss—"Are you the boss in this office?"

Clerk (scared)—"N—N—no, sir."

Boss—"Well, then, don't act like a driveling idiot."



Raglan Rogers—"Halloween mask ball, hey? I'll mark a line around me face wid dis charcoal ter represent a mask an' butt in.

"Gee, but dat was dead easy! This will just about be the time o' me life.

"Youse are a beaut of a hesitater, Miss Dominoe!"
Miss Dominoe—"What a perfect make-up you have!"

Raglan Rogers—"Here's where we sample the eats, fair one!"
Servant—"Guests will unmask upon entering the banquet-room——

"So I will assist you to remove your mask, sir!"
Miss Dominoe—"Heavens! that is his real face!"

Raglan Rogers—"I lost the eats! Shucks, them durned boobs can't take a joke'"

Client—"My uncle left all his money to the deserving poor! What would you advise me to do?"

Lawyer—"Turn over a new leaf and be one of them!"

Must Have Been Mistaken.

Pat was standing in the aisle of a crowded street car when the car suddenly stopped and Pat was precipitated into the lap of a woman passenger. The indignant lady exclaimed:

"Well, what do you think you are?"

Pat replied, smilingly:

"Well, begorra! I t'ought I was an Oirishman, but I guess I'm a Laplander."

Dead Slow.

An American motoring through a small Scotch town was pulled up for excessive speed.

"Didn't you see that notice, 'Dead Slow'?" inquired the policeman.

"Course I did," returned the Yankee; "but I thought you meant your town."

Small Choice.

Pat—"Yis, sorr, wur-rk is scarce, but Oi got a job last Sunday that brought me foive dollars."

Mr. Goodman—"What! you broke the Sabbath?"

Pat (apologetically)—"Well, sorr, 'twas wan av us had t' be broke."

Had to Deny Himself.

"Wa-al, some ways I'd like to an' some ways I guess I wouldn't," said honest Farmer Bentover when the suave dispenser of encyclopedias had paused in his siren song. "Ye see, if I was to sign for that 'ere cyclopedee in forty-seven parts, includin' the index an' appendicitis, I'm sort er afraid I'd be too tired to enjoy readin' it; while if I read it at my leisure, as I'd ort to do, in order to git the good of it, I wouldn't hev time to earn the price. So, all things considered, I guess I'll hev to deny myself the privilege, as it were. Looks sorter like rain off to the northwest, don't it?"

Astrology Hits One Thing Right.

Professor Longhair—"Astrology teaches that a girl born in January will be prudent, good-tempered, and fond of dress; if born in February, affectionate, kind-hearted, and fond of dress; in March, somewhat frivolous and fond of dress, in April, inconstant and fond of ——"

Hostess—"In what months are girls born who are not fond of dress?"

Professor Longhair—"In none, madam."

Resented.

"Which is the first and most important sacrament?" asked a Sunday school teacher of a girl preparing for confirmation

"Marriage," was the prompt response.

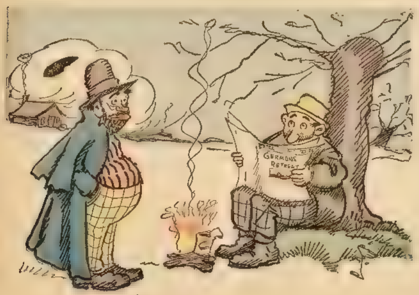
"No, baptism is the first and most important sacrament," the teacher corrected

"Not in our family," said the pupil haughtily; "we are respectable."

An Affirmative Answer.

Eager Young Man (who has called up adored one)—"I can't wait any longer, dear. I really had to phone. Will you marry me?"

Gentle Voice (in reply)—"Why, yes, of course I will. But haven't you got the wrong number?" And he had



Strange Hobo—"Where are you going to put up for the winter?"
Browsing Bill—"Wot sort of a question is that to ask a bo? Do I look like a guy wot's goin' to put up?"

Couldn't Wait.

A well-dressed lady having given the signal that she desired to alight, the street car was brought to a stop, but just as the rear step was directly over a small mud puddle

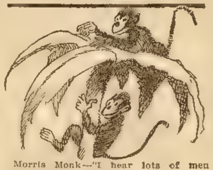
The lady looked an instant and then asked: "How do you think I can get off here?"

And the conductor replied: "I cannot tell you, madam, but I do know that we can't wait until that puddle dries up."

Opening His Eyes.

A little girl, finding her grandfather dozing, clambered onto his knee and endeavored to awaken him by pulling his eyelashes. Annoyed at being disturbed from a peaceful nap, the old man scolded the child for her roughness.

"Wough!" she exclaimed, pouting, "I wasn't wough. I was only twying to open your eyes by the stwings."



Morris Monk—"I hear lots of men complain that food is too high."
Minnie Monk—"I'll bet they're sorry they lost the art of climbing."

Would Amount to the Same.

The wealthy old lady was very ill and sent for her lawyer to make her will

"I wish to explain to you," she said weakly, "about disposing of my property."

The lawyer was sympathetic. "There, there, don't worry about it," he said. "Just leave it to me."

"Oh, well," said the old lady resignedly, "I suppose I might as well. You'll get it anyway."

The Warning.

Again the ringing in his ears! It was the warning he had dreaded. He knew his time had come. Yet, although he had started at the sound, he seemed half-dazed and wholly careless of the consequences

But still the ringing in his ears!

"Drat it!" he finally said, and springing from his bed the careworn commuter shut off the alarm clock and proceeded to dress for the 7:10 train.—Puck.

He Wanted to Know.

"I say, my friend," called the motorist to the farmer, as he drew up alongside of the field, "I'm looking for a decent road to take me into Squigglesville."

"I'm derned glad to hear it," replied the farmer. "Ef ye happen to find it, stranger, send me a teliygram, will ye?"

Couldn't Get Used to It.

"So the Youngweds have separated? I suppose it was because he couldn't support her in the style to which she was accustomed?"

"No; because she couldn't accustom herself to the style in which he could support her."

The Dark Ages.

"The boy at the head of the class will state what were the dark ages of the world." Boy hesitates.

"Next! Master Jones, can you tell me what the dark ages were?"

"I guess they were the ages before spectacles were invented."

A Clumsy Job.

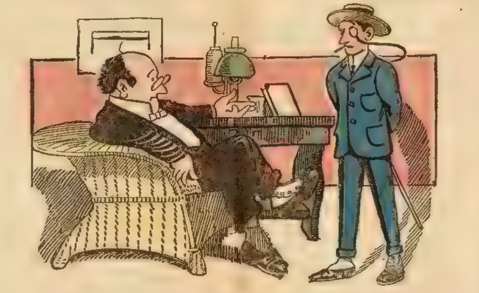
"He's a self-made man."

"I know. He surely made a mistake in not consulting an expert."

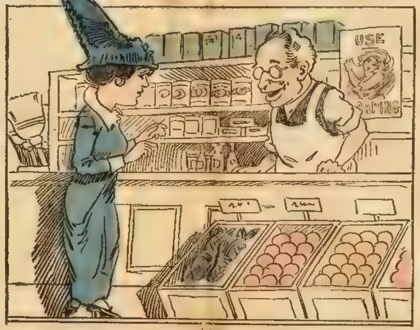
One in a Million.

Stranger—"The whole town seems to be turning out to this funeral. The deceased must have been very popular"

Native—"Stranger, he was one man in a million. After he bought his car, he gave everybody a ride that he had promised"—Judge



Father—"Listen, my boy. I want you to avoid my mistakes in life."
Son—"Oh, I will, dad! I'll give my son twice the allowance that you give me, and take his advice in all matters of dress."



Grocer—"What kind of cabbage do you want?"
Young Wife—"Send me a high forehead."

Misleading.

A countryman in a restaurant ordered roast lamb, and the waiter bawled out: "One lamb!"

"Great Scott, mister!" cried the countryman, "I can't eat no hull lamb! Gimme some fried oysters instead."

"One fried oyster!" bawled the waiter.

"Gee whiz, mister, one fried oyster ain't going to be enough. Gimme a dozen of 'em. Durn these city eatin' places!"

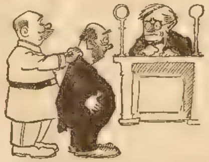
A Small Boy's Question.

"May I ask you a question, dad?" asked little Pat.

"Well, what is it?"

"Well, if the end of the world was to come and it was destroyed when a man was up in an aeroplane, where would he land when he came down?"

"Go to bed at once, sir!" roared his dad.



Vagrant—"Listen, Judge; I'm a hobo, but this town was named after my great grandfather!"
Judge—"Impossible!"
Vagrant—"But true! He was named in 1776, and this town wasn't on the map then!"

Attacking School System.

Small Boy—"Father, what is an equinox?"

Fond Parent—"What in the world do you go to school for? Don't you study mythology? An equinox is a mythical animal, half horse, half ox. The name is derived from the Latin "equine" horse, and "ox." Dear me, they teach you absolutely nothing that is useful nowadays!"

Hadn't Asked for It.

Mrs. B. saw her little 3-year-old daughter come from the back door of the house next door eating a cookie, and when the little lady came into the house her mother turned to her and said:

"Why, Elsie, you must not ask Mrs. K for cookies."

"I didn't ask her, mother," said Elsie: "I know where she keeps them"

One Thing Had Grown.

Rich American Father-in-Law—"My daughter and I are much disappointed at your chateau. It seems to be a barren tract of land, and I don't believe anything has grown on it for fifty years"

Count de Bakkoxisnek—"Monsieur forgets ze magnificent mortgages."

Wondered if It Paid.

A month-old Jersey calf was nibbling at the grass in the yard and the summer girl eyed it doubtfully

"Tell me," she said, turning impulsively to her hostess 'does it really pay to keep so small a cow?'"

Forgot the Password.

An old cavalry horse was in the shafts and the officer was in a hurry. Taking the reins from the driver, he shouted, "Charge!" and away the animal galloped stopping dead when he reached the barracks, at the word "Halt"

The next morning an Englishman wanted to catch the boat from the quay, and the driver said: "Sure, your honor, there ain't a horse in oul' Ireland who can go so fast."

He cracked his whip and shouted "Charge!" and away the horse went.

Nearing the quay, Pat yelled: "Jump for Heaven's sake. I've forgotten the password!"

Hard to Understand.

A Scottish farmer recently paid a visit to a south of England cattle show, and while walking around began a conversation with a native farmer. Neither could well understand the other. The Scotsman got a little nettled at this and put it down to the Englishman's stupidity.

"Man," he said at last, "yer cows moo a' right and yer cocks craw quite plain, but I'm hanged if I can mak' you oot."

Not a Botched Job.

A professor was expostulating with a student for his idleness, when the latter said:

"It's of no use, I was cut out for a loafer."

"Well," declared the professor, surveying the student critically, "whoever cut you out understood his business."

Her Hair.

"I think the baby has your hair, ma'am," said the nurse girl, looking pleasantly at her mistress.

"Gracious!" exclaimed the lady, glancing up from her novel. "Run into the nursery and take it away from him! What will he do next?"

"My master sent me with this basket of peaches to his sweetheart—24 peaches for her 24th birthday! I will be more gallant than my master—I will eat three of the peaches!"

Could Be Used Again.

"Then this," asked the rejected suitor, "is really final?"

"Quite!" was the calm reply "Shall I return your letters?"

"Yes, please," answered the young man. "There's some very good material in them I can use again!"

Knew All About It.

Grinnand Barrett—"Hamfatter [illegible] just bought a farm."

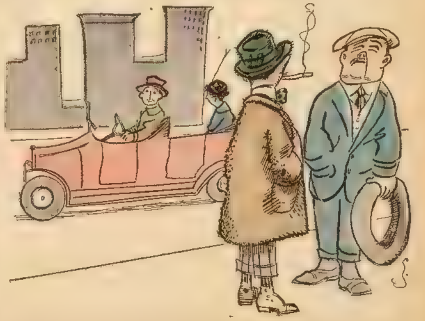
E. Forest Frost—"Does he know anything about farming?"

Grinnand Barrett—"My, yes! Why, he played in 'The Old Homestead' and 'Way Down East' for years."

Brave in Company.

Wife (after callers had gone)—"How dare you scold me before company!"

Hub—"Well, you know, my dear, I don't dare do it when we are by ourselves."



First Auto Salesman—"Why don't you speak to Dobson—he bought a car of you, did he not?"
Second Auto Salesman—"Yes, a $600 one. You don't suppose I'll speak to a chap that drives a $600 car, do you?"

Hold-Up Versus Hold-Out

Or, THE EYES OF LOVE

By John Leisk Tait

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PART II.

THIRTY minutes after the train left New York Morrison fell asleep in his chair; and it was nearing noon next morning when he finally aroused himself sufficiently to realize his position. He bought some sandwiches at a stop, and ate them in his seat as he observed others doing around him. Then, for the first time, he took a critical view of his situation.

He felt instinctively that he had blundered terribly in leaving New York; but it was now too late to retrieve that. By this time the stockholders were meeting, and the deputy sheriff would be searching for him with his warrant. Manifestly his only salvation now lay in going forward.

By the time Omaha was reached he had come to a decision. He had been educated as a mining engineer. He would go to the copper mines, obtain work there in his profession, and when he had acquired a competence he would return to New York and clear the stain from his name. As he thought of this, there rose before him the vision of clear, blue eyes, gazing trustingly into his own, and the voice of one saying: "Disguise or none, I'll know you wherever you come beore me." And as he thought, life began to lose some of its bitterness, and Hope, eternal architect of happiness, began to hew the shaft and lay the architrave of a new mansion of delight which he would eventually occupy—and not alone.

Meantime he had thought much over the events leading up to his hurried flight from the city. The more he thought, the more profoundly he became convinced that Jimmie Ballard was closely connected with the present whereabouts of those stock certificates. He recalled things he had heard about the unscrupulousness of the methods employed by Ballard, Larrimore & Swayne. The whole thing seemed of one piece. And as he thought a great bitterness welled up in his heart toward those who had taken advantage of his unfamiliarity with the conventions to work his downfall. It all seemed so bitterly unjust.

When he applied for work at the copper mines he was compelled at first to accept a position on one of the air-drill shifts. This gave him Saturdays off, and kept him in touch with the chief engineer of the Bison mine, who had promised to take him on his staff at the first opening. It was while working on his regular shift at the drill that he overheard a conversation between two of the miners which stirred anew the fountains of his bitterness toward the firm which, he was now firmly convinced, had caused his ruin in New York.

"Yes," one of them was saying, "I reckon it's a sure thing. Ole Ballard's a comin' out hisself Saturday to look 'er over. He don't buy no mine, they tell me, without goin' through an' looking at the leads. Don't nobody fool that ole fox!"

The other chuckled.

"Wonder if he'll carry the wad o' bills they say he keeps on 'im when he's in New York!"

"How's that?"

"Oh, I dunno! Maybe it's all a lie. They tell me he allus packs a bunch o' thousan' dollar plasters in 'is jeans—sometimes as much as a hundred thousan' dollars. Carries it in 'is inside vest pocket, they tell me. Queer them hold-up fellers in the city never located it!"

The talk drifted on, but Joseph Morrison heard no more. Old John Ballard, of Ballard, Larrimore & Swayne, was coming Saturday to inspect the mine. There was but one way for him to come. He must ride in across the Toopah hills on the stage from the railway station forty miles to the south.

Old John Ballard was the father, and as he believed the instigator of Jimmie Ballard who had stolen the Accolade stock certificates from his coat that fateful night, and sent him wandering and accused over the face of the earth. So Joseph Morrison told himself as he lay in his cot that night, bitterly reviewing the situation. If the old man carried $100,000 on his person, and if he, Joseph Morrison, should forcibly acquire possession of that money after the custom of the hills, what would it be more than the Ballards had done to him, after the custom of the city?

Much brooding had possibly temporarily unbalanced the man. However that may be, the following Saturday morning Navajo Jack, the driver of the Yankee Flat stage, suddenly became aware that he was looking into the muzzle of a sawed-off shotgun that yawned from a wayside bush until it appeared big enough to take in stage, passengers, team and all. With characteristic promptness he jerked his leaders back upon their haunches and threw his whole weight upon the brake. The hissing of the brake-leathers against the iron tires, the scrape and shuffle of the horses' feet in the road and the driver's sharp "Whoa!" were succeeded by a moment of dead silence. Navajo Jack, warned by long experience with "road agents," sat nonchalantly gazing skyward, offering no resistance, but keeping, nevertheless, a tight rein upon his restless nigh-wheeler.

On the seat beside him sat the express messenger, holding both hands as high above his head as he could reach them. The formidable rifle which he had been sedulously nursing only a moment before lay disregarded in the road. Old John Ballard poked his head querulously through the stage door. Tenderfoot though he was, he read in one glance the meaning of that situation, and gave vent to his feelings in one emphatic, if profane, ejaculation. He was answered by the man behind the sawed-off shotgun, whose gray eyes regarded him inscrutably from behind his mask and whose voice carried the tense, vicious intonation of the crack of a whip:

"Get down, there, all of you! Line up!"

Under the circumstances there was nothing else to do. The passengers complied with alacrity and a unanimity that was meant to be gratifying to their interviewer. Only old John Ballard complied surlily; and even he, knowing something of the crotchets of highwaymen, and holding a settled aversion to bullets in his anatomy, carried his hands ostentatiously up and in front of him.

"Lively, now! No false plays! Line up!"

The road agent was shifting his gun nervously, covering first one and then another as the party came tumbling through the stage door. There was an anemic young man, bound for Phoenix, where he was to teach school and wrestle with an inherited tendency to consumption. There were two roughly dressed men of middle age, evidently prospectors. There was an athletic but extremely nervous Methodist minister, returning from a visit to his people in the East. There was a gentle-faced matron of quiet dignity, old John Ballard's wife. After her came a veiled young lady, carefully wrapped in a capacious linen duster and descending with dainty deliberation. Then came three young students from the State School of Mines.

When all had ranged themselves across the road, the highwayman threw one searching glance into the empty coach, and then dropped his shotgun into the crook of his arm.

"Step out here, one at a time! Lively now! Drop your money on that flat rock. Never mind about your jewelry! Money's all I want—but take care," he added with a sinister pat of his gunstock, "that you don't forget any of that. Step lively, now!"

The school teacher, who stood at the end of the line nearest the outlaw, stepped forward and lugubriously drew from his pockets two five dollar bills and a few pieces of silver.

"Chuck it!" commanded the man behind the gun impatiently. "Back into line! Next!"

Old John Ballard, choking but impotent, stepped forward. With anger-palsied hands he produced a large wallet stuffed with currency, and flung it down on the rock beside the schoolmaster's offering. As he started to step back the shotgun was suddenly leveled upon him, and the highwayman's voice cut the air like a whipsaw:

"On the square, there! Play it square! You're forgetting something! I want that roll of big bills! Put it down!"

Purple and speechless with indignation, the old man thrust his hand into the inner pocket of his waistcoat, and drew out a package of greenbacks of large denominations. Glowering upon it for an instant, he dropped it beside the wallet with a grunt that was half curse and half sob. Then, without a word, he took his place once more in the line.

One by one the prospectors and the preacher contributed their quota to the highwayman's increasing pile of currency, and retired again into the line. Gentle old Mrs. Ballard fished a silken, knitted purse out of her handbag, and placed it beside the rest.

"I haven't any money with me excepting these few coins," she said deprecatingly. Navajo Jack, relating his version of the affair in the barroom of Silver Jim's place in Phoenix, afterwards declared that the old lady actually begged the road agent's pardon for her thoughtlessness in not bringing more money along; but Navajo Jack was given to exaggeration when he had taken more than a pint of red liquor.

Following Mrs. Ballard, the veiled young lady stepped forward to add her contribution. Her handbag was new, and the clasp resisted her efforts to open it. Finally, with a little exclamation of impatience, she threw up her left hand quickly and lifted the thick veil she wore for complexion's sake—in order to see more clearly what she was about.

The effect upon the highwayman was remarkable. The tense arms supporting the shotgun relaxed, his jaw fell, and that part of his face not covered by the mask was suffused with a sudden flush. He took an involuntary step backward.

The girl, who had in the meantime succeeded in opening her refractory purse, sensed some subtle movement in the situation and glanced toward the outlaw, catching sight of him for the first time without having to look through an obstructing thickness of tulle.

For a moment she stared at the man in the mask. Then a slow flush mounted to the roots of her hair and slowly receded, leaving her white to the lips, but with eyes glowing like twin stars. She looked again full at the highwayman—a glance of mingled pity, comprehension and disdain. Then, mechanically, she started forward to deposit her money.

The movement recalled the highwayman to himself. He brought his weapon sharply to position once more, covering the men in the line.

"Hold on!" he said imperiously to the girl. "The show's over! Put your money back in your purse, and get into the coach."

The girl obeyed without looking at him again. With a perceptible effort the man in the mask pulled himself together, and addressed the party:

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "I call you all to witness that I have not touched a dollar of your money. I have, however, treated you to all the sensations of a genuine hold-up. I'm not a highwayman; I've done this on a—er—a fool bet.

"I don't want your money. Step forward now in turn, and take what belongs to you—and take care not to get things mixed. Then get back into the coach and go on your way.

"But take care," his voice grew sharp again, "that you don't try to get gay with me. I can shoot—and I'll do it if you go to making any bad breaks. Part of my—er—bet is that I see this through without any accidents. I don't want to lose that bet!"

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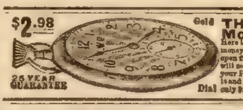

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There was relief on the countenances of some of the party, incredulity on some of the rest and blank consternation on the weather-beaten features of Navajo Jack—and it took a good deal to disturb the serenity of that widely experienced individual. He watched his passengers gathering up their discarded property, and saw them file back into the coach without speaking a word. He doubted the reality of it all. This thing wasn't—just simply couldn't—be true!

"Now, then, drive on there—and keep going!"

The lone highwayman jerked out rather than spoke the words. The bewildered stage driver started out of his trance and sent his whip-lash curling about the ears of his leaders with the single, eloquent ejaculation:

"Well, I'll be damned!"

Within the coach there was utter silence until the stage rounded the point of a hill a hundred yards further on, and began descending the grade to Yankee Flat. Then the wrath smoldering in old John Ballard's bosom burst into varied and picturesque profanity. It was in vain that sweet-faced Mrs. Ballard interposed her shocked remonstrances. The old man was oblivious alike of the admiration of the prospectors, the quavering deprecation of the preacher and the half-amused and wholly quizzical regard of the young lady. It was doing him good to swear. It was saving him from mental, moral and physical apoplexy. He gave his entire attention to it, and did not cease until he became breathless and began gasping like a new-landed fish.

The young lady patted his shoulder and chuckled.

"You certainly did it up brown!" she remarked. "The show wasn't a failure through any fault of yours!"

"She sure was some circus!" asseverated the taller of the prospectors. "But," he added, retrospectively, "that road agent was the limit. I'll be durned if I kin make him out!"

"Shucks!" opined his mate, "that's dead easy. Ten to one it was jest like he said—he's makin' a bluff holdin' up the stage on a fool bet or somethin'. They want nothin' to make 'im crawfish that-a-way less'n he'd a wanted to. He'd the dead wood on the hull bunch an' passel of us—an' that express messenger up thar on the box was a lookin' plum foolish!"

He laughed aloud at the recollection of it.

"I reckon that's so," agreed the first. "Come to think about it, the feller never said a word about the specie box—an' ef he'd a been a ginuine road agent, he'd shore 'a' called the turn on that, first dash out o' the chaparral. Nothin' to it!"

Such was the general verdict when the story had been told and broadly discussed that evening in Yankee Flat. It appeared inconceivable that a real stage robber could have permitted his victims to go scot free, with visible wealth of greenbacks in their possession, after he had them completely covered and in his power. And as there were no repetitions of the abortive hold-up, no effort was made to probe the matter or to capture the eccentric highwayman. Within a few days, save by the immediate participants in the affair, who were publicly regarded as the victims of a good joke, Yankee Flat had entirely forgotten the whole matter.

There might have been a difference of opinion, however, could the public have witnessed the maneuvers of the lone highwayman immediately following the departure of the stage. His first movement was to climb the peak of Black Butte, overlooking the stage road leading down into Yankee Flat. Arrived at the summit, he carefully concealed his shotgun beneath a heap of stones in the bed of a dry arroyo, and lighting a match reduced the red bandana handkerchief which had formed his mask to a cinder. Then he sat down, and scowlingly traced the course of the road along the curving hills until his eye rested upon the swaying dust cloud which marked the course of the descending stage.

"A nice mess!' he ejaculated bitterly, "a pretty kettle of fish, this is! I have balled up things beautifully now. It's a cinch she recognized me—in spite of the mask. It wasn't simply vexation at being robbed that brought that look on her face. I wish to God I'd broken my neck in the shaft last night!"

Strangely, perhaps, no one coupled the disappearance of Joe Morrison with the holding up of the Yankee Flat stage. However, copper miners are a nomadic lot, and if one of them throws up his job and departs without leave-taking, it is not usually regarded as a matter for surprise.

As for Joe Morrison, that individual was completely effaced. Three months later a bearded fellow dropped down into the office of the chief engineer of the Anita copper mine in southern Montana, and applied for a job as assistant.

"Any experience?" asked the chief, glancing up from a blueprint.

"Yes, a little."

"Where'd you learn?"

"Colorado School of Mines."

"Got your diploma?"

"Yes."

"I reckon I'll have to try you. Jackson got an arm broken this morning on the 600-foot level. What's your name?"

"Joe Henderson."

Joe Henderson proved a valuable acquisition at the Anita, and was soon promoted to the position of first assistant engineer. From this position, he ascended, a year later, to that of chief.

He was looked upon as a model young man, inasmuch as he was always at his work, saved his money and did not drink to excess. It was said among the Anita's miners that Chief Engineer Henderson had no sweetheart except the mine; but miners are not expected to know all things. It would have surprised those who believed him indifferent to womankind if they could have seen his face on those evenings when he went cautiously into his trunk, and took from its most private compartment the photograph of a beautiful young girl with the name "Minnie Moss" scrawled loosely across its mount.

At any rate, there was no denying that he saved his money. His bank account grew steadily, and his almost feverish interest in its condition was regarded askance by those who were accustomed to win and spend in the free-hearted way of the West.

It was whispered among a certain out-at-the-elbows fraternity, nevertheless, that Joe Henderson was always ready to grub-stake a prospector for a share in his possible find; and a certain account in the well-thumbed personal ledger of the chief engineer of the Anita copper mine exhibited a large and growing debit without a single credit to alleviate the lugubrious dissatisfaction with which, from time to time, he was accustomed to regard it.

But there came a morning when he was called from his office by a pair of tattered wanderers who came drifting into camp with an overloaded burro between them. They gave Joe Henderson certain bits of rock which he carried forthwith into the office of the Anita's chief assayer. A few hours later he accompanied the now greatly excited prospectors to the government registration office, and there formally acquired a one-third interest in the Minnie mine. Three months later Joe Henderson sold that one-third interest to a syndicate of eastern capitalists for a cool $500,000.

Those who had examined the property called him a fool for selling so cheaply; but Joe Henderson, beyond a certain point, appeared to have an absolute disregard for money. Indeed, it was said that he had dropped from $750,000 to the price actually paid in consideration of the payment being made wthin ten days.

Again it must be said that his antics in the presence of that photograph in the secret compartment in his trunk would have proved greatly surprising, and possibly not a little illuminating, to those who regarded him as a bit peculiar. It is sufficient to note, at this point, that the night after he received the letter notifying him that his offer had been accepted he spent at least double his usual time devouring the beautiful face in the photograph, and muttering between sundry sufficiently idiotic performances:

"At last! at last! I'm coming, Minnie-girl—and I'm coming fixed to clear it all up!"

Altogether, it was just as well for Joe Henderson's established reputation for sobriety that the shutters on his room at the Widow Simpson's boarding-house were unbroken and closely drawn that night.

The next morning he notified the superintendent of the Anita that he meant to leave. The information was received with incredulity, not unmixed with dismay.

"Why, Joe, I'd as soon have thought of the old Anita playing out herself. What's the matter? If it's more salary——"

"Salary has nothing to do with it. I'm quitting to look after some business in the East—that's all."

"But can't we fix you up with a leave of absence—three months or so? We don't want to lose you altogether, Joe!"

Joe's hand went out, and rested upon the superintendent's shoulder.

"Thank you, Blatchford! I'm glad you feel that way about it. In some ways, I don't want to leave. But I wouldn't stay for the Anita herself."

"How soon are you going?"

"Just as soon as I can get an answer to a telegram I sent last night—three or four days at the outside. I've provided for everything, so that my going will not affect you. Bruce knows as much about the work as I do. He's been my first assistant for two years now. I'm glad to recommend him as my successor. If you give him the place the work will go on without a hitch."

It was four days later that Joe Henderson, grip in hand, strode down the street of the little mining town on his way to the railway station. His train would leave in half an hour.

Suddenly as he went a terrible cry was raised—a cry that froze the blood in the veins of all who heard it in that mining town, and sent men, women and children flying to the mouth of the shaft that led to the lower levels of the Anita.

The mine was on fire!

Hundreds of miners were caught in those lower levels—caught like rats in a trap! Unless the flames could be quickly controlled they must die horribly!

Joe Henderson flung his grip down upon the sidewalk, and raced with the rest for the mouth of the shaft. He forgot the cherished purpose of years. He forgot everything except that those men who had worked by his side, and under his command, for years were perishing down there—and he must save them!

He swung into the cage, and called imperiously for volunteers. A hundred brawny miners sprang forward. He lifted his hand and warned them back.

"Only the best men can go on this trip!" he cried. "You, Petersen, and Connolly, get in. Twenty of the best!"

The men fairly fought for places in the cage, and more than one physical giant broke into a passion of profane weeping when the voice of the chief engineer denied him the privilege of going. Within two minutes the cage was filled with picked men.

"Lower away!" Henderson shouted hoarsely.

Instinctively he assumed command and gave direction to the whole campaign of rescue. There was not a foot in any of those levels that he did not know; not a timber with whose position and strength he was unfamiliar.

There was but one way of salvation possible. They must flood the mine. He entered a drift on the second level above that in which the fire was raging, and led the way to a place near the end of the drift where the timbering was re-enforced with concrete work through which a trickle of water was slowly seeping.

"Dig there!" he commanded, and added more in prayer than in profanity, "and dig like hell!"

When the work had proceeded for ten minutes he called a halt.

"McGregor will stay with us," he directed. "The rest of you go back to the mouth of the drift and have the cage lifted to within three feet of the roof of it, where you'll be above the water. Get in the cage, and watch for us when the flood comes. Grab us if you can, but don't stay if you fail. Get out of the shaft then as fast as they can lift away. The smoke is thick in here now."

"D'ye git th' moind av him?" cried big Dan Cleary, fairly blubbering as they raced back for the mouth of the drift. "Th' gossoon's picked thot dommed scone-ating McGregor t' die wid 'im!

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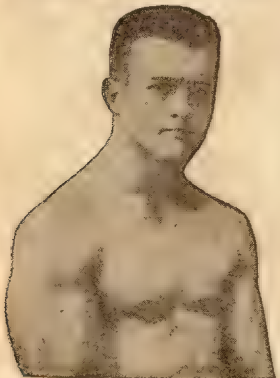

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A few minutes later, although it seemed an eternity to those watchers in the cage, the first foaming rush of the loosened waters came sweeping beneath them and tumbled, hissing, into the shaft below. Loose timbers flung and careened upon the crest of the rising flood that seethed and roared and reached. Presently Dan Cleary made a frantic lunge over the side of the cage, and straightened up, clinging for dear life to a feebly struggling form. Half a dozen hands were stretched out to re-enforce his brawny grasp, and an instant later Joe Henderson was lying in the bottom of the cage and that vehicle was speeding upward for the mouth of the shaft.

The drift was running full. All chance of saving McGregor, if any had existed, was gone.

Henderson had escaped with only some bad bruises. His first inquiry was for McGregor.

"Poor fellow!" he exclaimed. "He started with me for the mouth of the drift when we had picked through the wall; and the water deepened as we ran. I saw him stumble, and made a grab for him, but my light went out. I think I must have struck it against the wall of the drift. The next I knew you had me in the cage."

By the time the mouth of the shaft was reached he was once more in possession of all his faculties. He chose a crew of forty men this time, and once more plunged with them into the pit below.

The water had been tapped on the sixth level. The fire which had cut off the imprisoned miners was on the eighth. All

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PERSONAL

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THOSE SUFFERING FROM WEAKNESS and lack of vigor should take Juven Pills. They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1, by C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (Z)

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MOTHERS—SEND FOR OUR FREE BOOK, "How to Train Your Boy to Make Money," written by a big-hearted man who has started more boys on the road to success than any other one in America. It tells—how to train your boy to be manly and independent—how to earn regular weekly salary—how to get his own clothes—how to handle money and accounts accurately—how to run a little business—It's free. Simply state your boy's name and age and the book will be sent. M. Siddall, 52 W. Illinois Street, Chicago.

of the lower levels—all below the fourth—ran approximately 38 degrees north of west, and all dipped toward the southeast. In the eighth level this dip was accentuated; and owing to a "fault" in the formation, again dipped sharply to the northwest after approaching perilously near the floor of the levels above. It was in the jug-like chamber at the extreme northwest of the eighth level that the men were entrapped.

Henderson stopped the cage on the fifth level, and led his crew a hundred and fifty yards up its slope to where a winze, or air shaft, cut through to the levels below. Owing to the inclination of the levels, the water had not reached this winze except at its bottom on the eighth level. It was, however, choked with smoke ascending from the fire raging below.

Down this perilous shaft the men were lowered, two at a time, to the seventh level. Then followed a race through the midnight chambers that led them a quarter of a mile farther northwest. Finally Henderson pointed to a spot in the floor of the level which, he knew, lay immediately above the apex of the level below, and ordered the men to dig.

Four hours they dug and lifted and strained, Henderson working with them with his hands, until at last the picks drove through, and a hoarse cry that was more animal-like than human burst from the throats of the imprisoned men below.

It was high time. They stood up to their armpits in water, and the flood was rising over a foot an hour.

Joe Henderson rose to the surface with the last cageful. When he appeared a mighty cheer went up, and the half-hysterical miners picked him up and carried him on their shoulders to his boarding-house.

There, twenty minutes later, he was waited upon by a party of mine-owners and speculators who had been inspecting the Anita at the time of the fire, and who had been imprisoned with the miners in the cul-de-sac at the end of the eighth level.

The spokesman's face and voice were somehow familiar. After their acknowledgments had been tendered to the man whose knowledge of the mine and ready command of the situation had made their rescue from a horrible death possible, the leader remarked:

"I seem somehow to have known you before, Mr. Henderson. Your voice reminds me strongly of a Mr. Morrison whom I used to know in New York."

Like a flash the man's identity revealed itself to the engineer. Drawing himself up stiffly, he answered:

"You are not mistaken, Mr. Ballard. My real name is Morrison. I thought I recognized you, but was not sure. It has been a long while since I saw you last—not since the evening we dined together at the Battery Club and some very valuable stock certificates disappeared from my pockets. I was forced to change my name, temporarily, on that account; but it is my purpose to resume it at once—and I am returning to New York in the morning for that reason."

Jimmie Ballard's face flushed. He started to hold out his hand, then changed his mind, bit his lip, and stammered:

"I—I want to talk with you—privately, if you please—at once. I—have something to tell you which I'm sure you'll be glad to learn."

The chief engineer nodded quietly.

"Suppose we go up to my room."

It was rather an incoherent story which Jimmie Ballard poured out. It was full of honest remorse, punctuated with self-denunciation. It was a tale that bristled with surprises. The engineer listened with a white face, and just at the last his eyes kindled strangely.

"I know you think I'm a rotter," began Jimmie, "and suspect that I had a hand in having those stock certificates stolen from you that night. I didn't. What I did was bad enough, but I wasn't guilty of that—and wasn't capable of being knowingly mixed up in that.

"What I did was to get you groggy. The governor had asked me to do that, and then pay attention to anything you dropped about the Eagle Creek combine—but I had no idea that anything further was to be done, and I am sure he hadn't. I left the next morning on a three weeks' cruise in my yacht, and knew nothing of what had taken place after I left you at the club until after my return. 'Pussyfoot' Williams found the certificates on the floor of Grainer & Haight's waiting-room a few days after you left. I never did know the whole of the injustice you have suffered until now—and believe me, Morrison, if there is anything on earth that I can do to make amends, you have only to command me."

There was a queer, crooked smile playing about the corners of Joseph Morrison's mouth as he answered:

"Well, there is, old man; and it begins with letting me make a father confessor of you. There's a good deal in my life since I left the city that needs reconstruction. And when I've told you all of it, I've got a question to ask."

"Crack down!" said Jimmie laconically, and reached for a fresh cigar.

Morrison began at the beginning, and told him the whole story. He had not meant to mention Minnie Moss just yet, but found himself compelled to do so to explain his sudden change of plan in holding up the stage. Jimmie whistled.

"I beg pardon!" he ejaculated. "You surprised me, that's all. Go on."

"I surprised you? In what, please?"

"When you mentioned Minnie Moss."

Morrison flushed, then went pale.

"You still know her?" he questioned.

"You bet!" acknowledged Jimmie emphatically.

"Is she still—single?"

"She is, old man—she's single and, I believe, fancy-free. Didn't you know she's my sister?"

It was Morrison's turn to be surprised.

"Oh, I understand the situation now," said Jimmie suddenly. "You met her at the Van Dresslers' house party. There had been private theatricals before you came, I remember, and Sis had distinguished herself in the character of Minnie Moss, the dreadful flirt. Everybody got to calling her by that name around there, and they introduced her to you by that name. You were, pardon me, a good deal of a solemn ass just then—I suppose because she made a decided impression—and the Van Dresslers and the rest of them conceived it would be a good joke to perpetuate the deception. And so wherever you met her you heard her called Minnie Moss instead of Minnie Ballard. By the way, she's over at the hotel now."

Electrified at the news, Morrison gasped:

"Do you—suppose she—could ever be induced—to forget that I—tried to hold up a stage?"

"I'll tell you what," grinned Jimmie, cheerfully, "you just ask her that yourself."

Morrison took his advice an hour later. She met him with both hands outstretched.

"Even your beard is no disguise!" she declared. "You can't hide from me."

"I never want to try!" he answered. "I want to keep you with me always. May I?"

"I must refer you to Daddy," she said, dimpling demurely. "I rather think you have handled him before."

The End.

* * *

The Count's Revenge

(Continued from page five.)

spoken, and Count del Sarto thought he caught a strange glitter in their depth which made him uneasy. For a few seconds she continued staring at him, then she said slowly:

"I believe you are telling the truth this time."

"Then do you consent?" he asked anxiously.

"I guess so," she replied; "the world owes me a living and I am no longer young enough to get it the other way. One thing I wish to tell you, however, is that if that girl was really mine, you could not get me to play that dirty game, even if you offered all the wealth of France. As it is, I don't care, so it's a go. Shake!"

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

Playful.

As Tige, the dog who belonged to the Spink household, was finally detached from the trousers leg of the new iceman by Mr. Spink's vigorous efforts, the victim of the onslaught began to express his mind with unlimited freedom.

"That is a fine pup of a dog to have running around loose I——" But Mr. Spink broke in before he had time to further relieve his feelings.

"He's only playful, that's all," insisted the master of the dog, at the same time pressing something into the iceman's hand.

The man glanced at the wad of green and then, as he inclosed it safely in an inner pocket, his expression softened remarkably.

"I guess I can take a little fun as well as the next feller," he said, dryly. "But till you explained it I had a notion that the dog was in earnest when he bit that piece out o' my pants."

* * *

Absent-Minded.

He was on his way to propound the great question. How should he ask her? What would be her answer?

"Ticket, please," said the conductor.

The absent-minded traveler was so entirely absent that he paid no heed to the demand.

An impatient touch upon his arm and the louder repetition of "Your ticket, sir, if you please," restored the recreant mind to its accustomed body niche.

"Ticket? Yes, yes, in a minute—certainly, sir." He felt in his various pockets, looked in his wallet, took off his hat and scrutinized it as he turned it slowly around. Then, jumping up, he was looking on the floor, on the seat, under the seat, when a thin little squeak of a voice proceeding from a very small boy who was riding backward across the aisle said accusingly, "You chewed it up, mister. I saw yer!"

* * *

A Poor Way.

Jean longed for a kitten with all her heart, but her mother was not fond of cats, so she was not allowed to have one in spite of her eager pleadings. At length it became necessary for Jean to go to the hospital for an operation.

"I will make a bargain with you, Jean," said her mother. "If you will be a brave little girl about having your operation, you shall have the very nicest kitten I can find."

Jean climbed upon the operating table and took the ether without a struggle. As she came out from under the influence of the anaesthetic and began to realize how sick and wretched she felt, the nurse leaned over her to catch her first spoken word, "What a bum way to get a cat."

* * *

A Proud Boast.

A teachers' meeting was in progress, and it was decided that the more difficult subjects should come in the morning, and those that required less application later in the day. History was last on the list, and Miss Wheeler, the young teacher, protested.

"But it certainly is easier than science or mathematics," the principal insisted.

"As I teach it," replied the young teacher, "no subject could be more difficult and confusing."

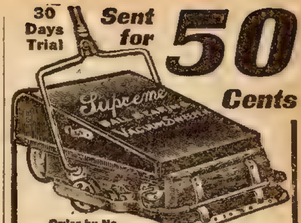
* * *

Their Bath.

The mother of a family that had just moved to a small Oklahoma town was being sympathized with by a visitor because of the distance of the house from the creek which furnished the water for household purposes.

"It must be quite a tax upon your strength to carry water for the Saturday night bath for your large family," the visitor suggested.

"Oh, I don't mind," was the cheerful reply. "Besides, I give 'em all a good wash before we left Texas."



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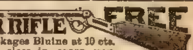

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504 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO, ILL.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1886, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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1,250,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Reform the world, begin at home.

Better a foggy present than a misty past.

Strange chickens often roost in family trees.

Happiness is mostly a matter of the imagination.

With some people there's no such word as enough.

A man is unknown to the company he can keep out of.

All the world loves a lover because it likes a free show.

Love is blind—and a homely girl may well be glad of it.

A woman's mirror casts and causes a variety of reflections.

Laugh less at your neighbor's troubles and more at your own.

The best some people can do is express second-hand opinions.

Don't blame your wife's relations. You selected them yourself.

When some men think, they make a noise like a boiler shop.

When a man works for himself he has no use for a timekeeper.

Even a poor barber is seldom as unsatisfactory as a bad razor.

There are men who can't even tell the truth without exaggerating.

If a bachelor has no opinion of his own he should annex a wife.

A woman always wants another woman to help her keep a secret.

The villain always gets his on the stage. In real life he gets ours.

Only a strong-minded woman can convince herself that she is homely.

Occasionally a man has a soft spot in his heart, but more often in his head.

An innocent-looking banana peel is often the first step to a downward career.

A woman seldom makes a fool of a man. She merely points the way and he does the rest himself.

It may be more blessed to give than to receive, but most of us are willing to let the other fellow have the blessing.

A woman's tongue is her weapon—yet few women are arrested for carrying concealed weapons. The reason is obvious.

"There are very few rich doctors," says a writer in one of the medical journals. Also the country is overrun with poor ones.

PEPPERS

Talked Too Much.

J. Pierpont Morgan was always a silent man, and he would sometimes champion the silent with a story.

"Old John Bates, an upholsterer," so the story began, "was renowned for his silence. People who had been his customers for a generation had, many of them, never heard a word from him except 'Good morning. Five dollars. Thank you. Good day.' Old John, in fact, cultivated silence as a genius cultivates his art.

"A patron one day said to John:

"'What's the best kind of mattress?'

"'Hair,' was the reply.

"The patron, some twenty years later, had occasion to buy another mattress, and again she asked:

"'What's the best kind, John?'

"'Cotton.'

"'Cotton?' the patron cried. 'Why you told me twenty years ago that hair was the best.'

"The old man gave a quaint sigh.

"'Talking has always been my ruin,' he said."

No Use.

"Down in Zanesville, where I used to live," relates Dr. Washburn Yount, "there was an old colored man who owned a mule. He had more respect for that mule than for any man, white or black. Billy claimed that the animal could do anything but talk and that he didn't talk because he understood the superior wisdom of keeping still.

"Well, one day that mule was lost, strayed, or stolen. Uncle Billy nearly had a fit. He searched diligently all day long, and at the end of the day he was about ready to lie down and die. A friend tried to help him.

"'Uncle Billy,' he said, 'why don't you advertise for that mule?'

"'Whyn't Ah what?'

"'Advertise. Put a piece in the paper saying that he's lost. That will bring him back if anything will.'

"Uncle Billy laughed for the first time that day.

"'White man,' he said, between chuckles, 'dat mule er a powahful smaht animile, he suah are—but, Lawd bless you, he cain't read de newspapahs!'"

Too Lazy to Look.

United States Senator Lee S. Overman of North Carolina is always supplied with a stock of good Southern tales.

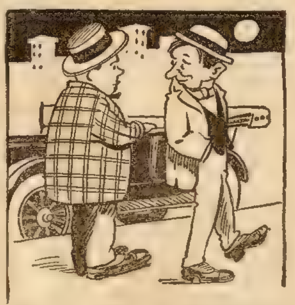
"In the southern part of Arkansas," relates Mr. Overman, "where the natives take life easy, a man and his wife were one day sitting on the porch when a funeral procession passed the house. The man was comfortably seated in a chair which was tilted back on its hind legs against the side of the house, and was engaged in whittling a piece of wood. As the procession proceeded, he said:

"'I reckon ol' man Williams' got about the biggest funeral that's ever been held around hyear, Caroline.'

"'A purty good-sized one, is it, Bud?' queried the wife, making no effort to move.

"'You betcher!' Bud answered.

"'I certainly would like to see it,' said the woman, 'What a pity I ain't facin' that way!'"



Stranger—"Young man, have you lost your self-respect?"

Victim—"Well, hardly! I've got a roll of it in my pocket, big enough to choke a horse."

What They Would Do.

"It is hard," Mr. Rockefeller said, "to realize what a million, let alone what a billion, is. I overheard two laborers talking about millions behind that hill there the other day.

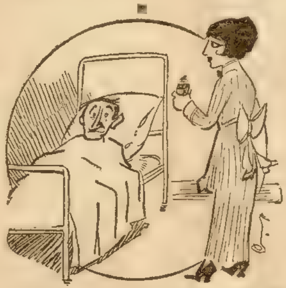
"'If I was a millionaire,' said the first laborer, as he threw a shovelful of dirt into a cart, 'I'd hire a front bedroom, and I'd tell 'em to call me at six. And then, when they came the next mornin' at six and called me, I'd shout: 'Go way! I don't have to get up. I got money.'

"After he had shoveled awhile in silence the laborer turned to his companion and said:

"'And what would you do, pard if you was a millionaire?'

"The other laborer straightened up from his task with a sigh.

"'I'd have half a foot more len'th put to this shovel to save me poor back,' he said."



Patient (convalescing after operation)—"Can't I have appendicitis again, nurse?"

Nurse—"Of course, dear; just as soon as you earn some more money!"

Adding Insult to Injury.

Captain Amundsen, in a lecture at Madison, Wis., told of the hardships, especially the hardships of hunger, attendant on Arctic expeditions.

"And it is an unfortunate fact," said the discoverer of the South Pole, "that hunger is always accompanied by a vivid remembrance of the most delectable food one has ever eaten. While compelled to live for six months on one month's provisions, helped out, perhaps, by a little seal meat and seal blubber, you are tormented by visions of former banquets, Christmas dinners at home, certain favorite dishes. Yes, if you are hungry the thought of fine food is exquisite torture.

"And in this connection," the Captain continued, "I am reminded of a story about the governor of a certain German prison.

"One morning this governor said to the chief warder:

"'I say, Fritz, No. 76 is behaving worse than ever. Put him on bread and water.'

"'But he is already doing two fast days, sir.'

"'Then,' ordered the merciless governor, 'give him a cook-book, and see that he reads it."

All Lucky.

An old farmer in Missouri called at a roadside public house, where he was well known. The landlady asked him to buy a ticket for a lottery they had on there.

"Well," he said, "I have nothing in my pocket or I might."

"Oh, that's all right, John," she said; "take the ticket and pay for it any time."

Some time later John called again and the landlady asked him if he knew who had won the lottery.

"No," he said. "Who won?"

"Well, I hardly durst tell you, but our Sam won. Wasn't he lucky?"

"Yes," said John, "he was lucky. And who won second then?"

"I durst hardly tell you. Who would you think now?"

"I couldn't say," said John.

"Well, it was our Sally. Wasn't she lucky?"

"And who was third?"

"Well," she said, "you would never guess and I might as well tell. I was third. Wasn't I lucky?"

"You were," he said. "Did I ever pay you for that ticket, missus?"

"No, John, you didn't," she said, frowning upon him.

"Well," said John, "ain't I lucky?"

In Disguise.

In the spring of '85 a reporter for the Arkansas Traveler died. The day after the funeral a visitor to the office found the editor and his staff talking about their late associate.

"It has been a sad loss, friends," the visitor said, "a sad loss, indeed." He sighed and looked about the room. "Ah, I am pleased to see," he went on, "that you commemorate the melancholy event by hanging up crape."

Opie Read frowned. "Crape?" he said. "Where do you see any crape?"

"Over there," said the visitor, pointing.

"Crape be durned," said Read. "That isn't crape. That's the office towel."

Saving the Bottle.

Two Scotchmen had been having a good time on the heather downs of a little island, and were rowing back home across the firth, says Dean Mortimer Cooley of the University of Michigan, when the boat capsized. Dean Cooley told the story to the Engineers' Club.

Angus had clung to the boat, and Jock, who had clung to the bottle, was floundering bravely in the deep. Although a poor swimmer, he struck out for the skiff, holding the bottle in one hand. After a few strokes he became exhausted.

"Angus," he cried, "I dinna thenk I can mak' it."

"Well, if ye canna mak' it, Jock, throw it," called back Angus.

Forgetful.

Dinah was a product of New Orleans, a big, plump "yaller gal" who could cook the finest dinners for miles around. One day a new butler appeared upon the scene, and Dinah's mistress noticed that she took a great interest in the man. At last her mistress could stand her curiosity no longer and asked:

"Dinah, do you know that new man?"

Dinah took another long and scrutinizing look, and then slowly and reminiscently replied:

"Well, I dunno, Miss Alice; but I think he was ma fust husband!"

Just Bragging.

Clyde Fitch tells a new story of Whistler. The artist was in Paris at the time of the coronation of King Edward, and at a reception, one evening, a duchess said to him:

"I believe you know King Edward, Mr. Whistler?"

"No, madam," replied Whistler.

"Why that's odd," she murmured. "I met the King at a dinner party last year, and he said that he knew you."

"Oh," said the painter, "that was just his brag."

Unfair.

Two boys who managed to be rather unruly in school so exasperated their teacher that she requested them to remain after hours and write their names 1,000 times. They plunged into the task. Some fifteen minutes later one of them grew uneasy and began watching his companion in disgrace. Suddenly the first one burst out with despair between his sobs and said to the teacher:

"'Tain't fair, mum! His name's Bush and mine's Schluttermeyer."

ENGINE PRICES NOW VERY LOW

It is doubtful if there is another man in the United States who has made as thorough a study of the engine manufacturing business as has Ed. H. Witte, of the Witte Iron Works Co., 2522 Oakland Avenue, Kansas City, Mo. Himself a practical mechanic, Mr. Witte made his first engine with his own hands in a little shop over 27 years ago. Today he has one of the largest, best equipped and most economically operated engine factories in the country and he has continuously remained in personal charge of it.

Throughout his entire career Mr. Witte has sought to maintain the highest possible standard of engine quality—a standard by which all high grade engines the world over might be judged. And from his practical viewpoint he regards the amount of steady power an engine will develop from a given quantity of fuel as the real determining factor of engine quality. His efforts along this line have been eminently successful, as the Witte engine is famous for its small consumption of fuel, whether it be kerosene, gasoline, gas, distillate, naphtha, solar oil, toppings or other fuels of high or low grades. In fact, considering the small amount of fuel used in any size of Witte engine to give its full rated horse power, an engine buyer could well afford, were it necessary, to pay more than the low price asked for it because the great saving in operating cost would quickly make up the difference. However, this is not necessary. The Witte prices are the lowest yet quoted for strictly high grade engines. For instance, the price of a Witte 2 H-P is only $34.95; a 4 H-P, $69.75; 6 H-P, $99.35; 8 H-P, $139.65; 12 H-P, $219.90, and other sizes up to 22 H-P proportionately low.

The explanation of these remarkably low prices lies in the fact that because of unusually fortunate circumstances Mr. Witte is able to hold his manufacturing costs down to the lowest possible point, and to the further fact that he sells the entire output of his factory direct to engine users. Nature has given him a big lift in the shape of a natural gas well which furnishes free power, heat and light for his entire plant. This is a big saving and he gives his customers the benefit of it. He designed all his own special engine making machinery for still further reducing his cost of production and every buyer of a Witte engine gets the benefit of that saving also.

By selling direct from his factory to the user Witte wipes out all in-between profits and, moreover, he has devised a most liberal selling plan whereby the engine buyer may have the use of the engine and let it earn its own cost while being paid for. Every Witte engine is sold with a 5-year guarantee over Mr. Witte's own signature.

The new Witte catalog, handsomely illustrated in colors, is a masterpiece of engine literature. It makes the whole engine question so plain that any one can easily understand it, and gives valuable information which every prospective engine buyer should have. A postal addressed to Mr. Witte at the above given factory address will bring a copy of this catalog, free, to any one.—Adv.

RING TO RIDGEPOLE

A Boy's Struggle to Become the World's Greatest Circus Performer

By John Miller Gregory

[Copyright 1914 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 43, October 24. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Bert arrived at the circus lot the big canvas top was down and sweating men, hurrying hither and thither, were spreading it out in long strips on the ground and rolling it into huge balls which they loaded onto wagons, backed up for the purpose. Others, attended by men carrying torches, went from stake to stake, pulling them from the ground by means of a chain and lever, and leaving them where they fell to be gathered by other men who threw them into the stake wagon. At intervals on the road to the train were flaring gasoline torches to show the drivers the way. Everything was conducted with the utmost haste and in perfect system.

Bert looked around the lot for his friend the canvas man, but could find him nowhere. He felt lonely, and for the first time since he left home the realization that he had nowhere to spend the night came over him. He had drifted back to the circus lot as a matter of course without having any definite idea of what he was going to do there. Now that he was alone among all these strangers he felt a strange timidity coming over him, and he wished himself back in his own bed in his own little room.

He followed the line of torches to the circus train, where the men were loading the heavy wagons by means of runs placed on the flat cars. The horses would back up the vans to the runs and were then cut out, and the men on both sides, with two or three guiding the wagon tongue, would push the wagon up on the run and on to the flat, chock it under the wheels with huge blocks, and lash it to the car sides with ropes flung over the wagon top. As Bert watched them, a man holding a wagon tongue slipped and fell, and the wagon, swerving from the run, crashed over on the ground. The old trainmaster, whom Bert had seen that morning, cursed the man bitterly and ordered him away from the train. The worker demanded his money, but the trainmaster scornfully pointed to the broken wagon wheel and asked who was to pay for it, and the other walked away muttering sullenly to himself, his coat flung over his arm.

Here was a chance, Bert thought. It would give him an opening and maybe he could get a job later as a regular performer in the show. He touched the trainmaster on the shoulder.

"Do you want somebody to take his place?" he asked.

The old man regarded him for a moment in bitter scorn. Then a smile overspread his face as he recognized the boy of that morning.

"Sure; dig in there on that wagon. We pay eight dollars a week and cakes. You'll work on the runs, see. Now be careful of them wagons."

He turned away, and Bert, taking off his coat and putting it on the flat, grasped a wagon tongue and began to work with the other men at loading the show. There were not many more wagons to load. This was the last section of the train. The first, carrying the cook-house and sideshow tent, had left long before, and the second, with the performers, had followed shortly after the end of the performance. When the last wagon was loaded and lashed down, Bert turned to one of the men working with him and asked what next.

"Wot more d'you want?" came the surly rejoinder. "You'll get enough of roughneckin' wit dis show, wit'out lookin' fer more work. Th' best way to git on here is to do jes' what you're told and no more, see?"

"Well, can we go to sleep now?"

"Sure, if you can sleep under one of dem wagons wit'out fallin' off. De best way is to tie yourself on for the first few nights, then you'll git used to it."

So saying he climbed up on the flat and lay down on a pile of canvas, under one of the wagons. Bert followed suit and in a few minutes was sound asleep. He was awakened shortly by a flash of a lantern in his face, and sat up wondering where he was.

"Well," shouted a hearty voice, "if it ain't my old pal!" The boss canvas man grasped him by the coat collar and pulled him to his feet.

"What're you doing out here with these roughnecks?"

Bert saw the train was moving, gaining momentum at every moment, and he kept his feet with difficulty. He blinked at his friend.

"I got into trouble, all right," he said, "and my father turned me out of the house. There wasn't nothing else to do but get a job on the show."

"Well, what do you know about that?" the boss exclaimed in deep disgust. "This ain't no place for you. You come with me."

He started back over the flats and Bert followed, listening to the boss' explanation of his finding him. "You see there's been a bunch of hoboes following the show and riding out on the flats, so every night I takes a lantern and whenever I come across one what ain't working for us, I calls a helper and we oozes him off into the woods, see?"

"While the train's running?" gasped Bert.

"Sure," laughed the boss. "It don't hurt 'em none. They're too tough for that. I've thrown the same fellers off three nights in succession when we're playin' towns close together. They just picks themselves up and catches the next freight and comes on back with the show."

By this time they had come to a sleeping car which was hitched to the end of the flats. The boss held open the door for Bert to pass through and called the porter.

"Got a empty berth?" he asked.

"Sure," said the porter, "upper 10."

"That's your'n," said the boss to Bert. "Maybe we'll get you a lower tomorrow if you don't mind doublin' with somebody else." He turned to the porter. "This here," he said impressively pointing to Bert, "is the best tumbler in the show business. He's going to be a big thing with this show one of these days." Bert crawled into the berth. From below came the snoring of tired men. In a berth across from Bert one or two convivial spirits kept up an animated conversation across the aisle. As sleep came to him, Bert was smiling. He was with a circus. The dream of his life had come true.

CHAPTER VI.

BERT was awakened by the sound of men stirring beneath him and the shouts of rough voices whose owners made no attempt to modulate them. A faint light came through the transoms above his berth, but he had no idea what time it was. He opened the curtains and looked out, but the men he saw merely glanced at him curiously and went on dressing and talking among themselves. They spoke about the show; about the new act certain of them were working on; about the owner and his shortcomings; about the domestic unhappiness of some of them. Nothing seemed too sacred for public discussion. There seemed to be a general spirit of discontent in the air, which Bert afterward found always existed and meant nothing.

After a while he summoned enough courage to ask a man below him what time it was. The man regarded him with a friendly air.

"Time to get up. We'll be gettin' in in a few minutes. When'd you join out?"

"Last night," said Bert.

The man pushed up a hand which Bert grasped and found to be calloused and muscular. "My name's Hudson," said the man. "What's your act?"

"I don't know yet what I'm going to do. You see I haven't got a job yet, but one of the men saw me do some tumbling and he thought he could get me a job."

Bert was on the floor now dressing, and he noticed that Hudson was looking him over carefully, watching the working of the muscles in his arms, the spread of his chest and the way Bert handled himself generally.

"What else do you do?" he asked.

"Oh, I've been working at pretty nearly everything for two or three years," said Bert. "It looked as if I just had to do it."

"Well, that's what you'll do if you work on this show," said Hudson. "I ride in the parade and the pageant, go in the leaps, do a double and a single trapeze act and a tight wire act. I also do a heavy balancing act in the concert. I don't mind the work, but I hate like the devil to jump over them damn elephants."

He explained in detail to Bert just how to talk to Stark and what to promise and what to refuse. He gave him pointers on the salary to ask and told him about the sleeping and eating arrangements and the contract he would have to sign. When these things were understood Bert and his new-found friend went to the end of the car where a crowd of men were standing, waiting to get to the basin for their morning ablutions. Hudson pushed his way through them and beckoned Bert to follow.

"Don't hang around being polite," said Hudson. "If you want to get anything around a show, you've got to dig in. This towel here'll be so wet and dirty when a few of these fellers get through with it that it won't be worth using, so I always try to be first."

Hudson's way to the basin was beset by rough jokes about "butting in" and being in a hurry. One of the men doused him with a splash of water from a drinking-cup and others pushed him to and fro, but the bantering was good-natured and boyish. Even the older men joined in it. When he had a chance, Hudson introduced Bert to the crowd by a simple announcement that "this here's Bert Kingdon, who does a tumbling act." After that they all started their rough tactics on Bert, laughing good-naturedly when he came back at them in their own coin. Some of the men had brought their own towels and soap, and one of them offered his to Bert, but Bert refused when he saw there wasn't much choice between the proffered towel and that strung around the roller on the wall.

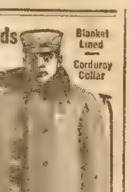
Before he left the car the porter came to him with a message from Stark, who wanted to see Bert. He found the owner in his private car with his secretary, busily dictating letters in a businesslike way. Bert sat on a trunk until the owner had finished and the stenographer was clacking away at his typewriter.

"Connor told me about you," said Stark. "What's your act?"

"I haven't got any regular act," said Bert. "I can do some tumbling, and some work on the bar and a trapeze. I can do nearly all the things the fellows did in the show last night, and some they didn't do."

"Hum!" said Stark. "The best thing for you is to frame up a double trap act with some other fellow. You'll go in the leaps too, and maybe Roland'll let you fill in in his tumbling act. I'll pay you $15 a week to start, and if your work comes up to the standard, we'll see if we can't pay you more. Here, sign this contract." He pushed a contract out to Bert, who signed it without reading it.

"Well, that'll be all," said Stark. Bert put his contract into his pocket and started out. At the door Stark stopped him. "There's another thing, if you want to stay on this show. We don't stand for no drinking, chasin' or general cussedness. If you're looking for trouble, you'll find it mighty soon. As long as you mind your own business, keep your



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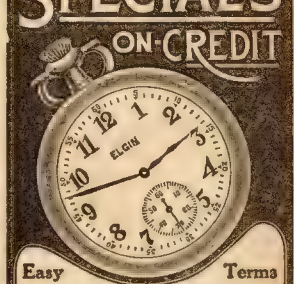

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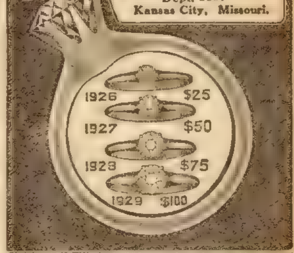

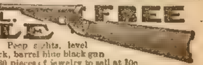

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mouth shut and do your work you can stay here. We work on this show. If you're lookin' for a soft job, job, you'd better go back home. If you want to make a good performer, you've got the chance. It's up to you."

"That'll suit me," said Bert. "I'm going to be the greatest aerial performer in the world before I quit."

Stark laughed. "They all say that in the beginning, and they believe it, too." He lit a cigar and turned back to his work.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next three weeks were busy ones for the new performer. He went about his work with a grim determination that made the other performers smile and Stark wonder if it would last. Ben Hudson, the tight wire walker, helped him in a thousand ways. He lent him some of his tights until Bert's arrived from New York, where he had ordered them. He offered to share his lower berth with Bert, and together they fixed up a double trapeze act which made good with the performers as well as the audience.

"Put all your new stuff in," said Hudson as they practiced the act. "It'll get these other guys going and make the act stick out." And Bert did so, inventing other stunts as he became more familiar with working with a partner.

He went in the leaps with a determination that even evoked admiration from Ben, who despised this work with a hatred that was venomous. At first he tried a single somersault over one elephant. The next afternoon he did two, then a single over two elephants. Two weeks after he had joined the show, he made a bet with Jimmy Martin, the star leaper of the show, that he would do as many as any leaper. Jimmy lost a week's salary on the result, but instead of forming a dislike for Bert, became his firm friend, and Bert took his place ahead of Jimmy in the estimation of the circus people.

Mary Dennis had helped Bert not a little in becoming acquainted with the other people on the show and making his beginning easy for him. She demurred when he offered to do little favors for her. "I know people do those things ordinarily, but on the circus it's different," she told him. "If you do things for me you don't do for the other women, they will begin to talk about us. Besides, I am able to do all things I need for myself. On the other hand, with me it is different."

Bert listened carefully to the distinction. "I can do things for you and nobody will think anything of it. You see we women know you men can't take care of yourselves properly, so if you want your fleshings mended or a button sewed on or something like that done occasionally, bring them to me and I'll fix them up for you."

Before long Bert had formed the habit of spending much of the time with Mary and her little brother, Bobby. Bobby was a fine little fellow, very manly and with a distinct aversion to wearing the wig with which he impersonated a girl in the double trapeze act with his sister. His complexion was as clear and his little muscles as pliable as fat when they were relaxed, and as steel-like as wire when taut. He much preferred clowning to doing his girl act on the trapeze. "Gee!" he used to say, "What do I want to make up like a girl for? I got to watch myself all the time to keep the wig from falling off; and then I can't do no real good stuff because people'll say that I ain't no girl. Gee, it's tough!"

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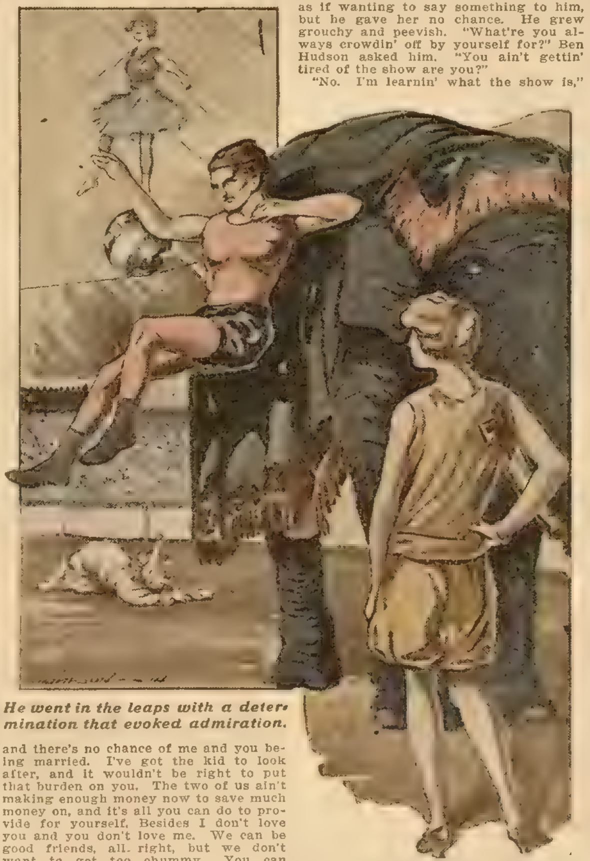
Mary soon noticed Bert's constant attendance upon her and she put her foot down on it. "Cut it, Bert," she would tell him with a fascinating little squareness to her chin, "you mustn't do it. We can't let any of them get anything on us, and there's no chance of me and you being married. I've got the kid to look after, and it wouldn't be right to put that burden on you. The two of us ain't making enough money now to save much money on, and it's all you can do to provide for yourself. Besides I don't love you and you don't love me. We can be good friends, all right, but we don't want to get too chummy. You can stand it, but I can't. I'm a woman and I've got to keep my name. We have to be especially careful around a show. There're so many women here that the slightest bit of scandal spreads like a prairie fire, and when once it starts, it's all off with the woman.'



He went in the leaps with a determination that evoked admiration.

"How about the man?" asked Bert.

"Oh, it don't make any difference about him. It's just the same outside. The man always gets by, and the woman stands the gaff."

All that afternoon Bert thought of what she told him. He was honestly attracted by the girl, but he put it down to a sisterly feeling caused by her kindness to him. Of course marrying at this time, he thought, was out of the question. He had his way to make, and it might take him many months to accomplish what he wanted to do. He determined to keep away from her.

He found it harder than he had thought at first it would be. There was much in common between them. Bert was just verging on twenty; she was a fascinating eighteen. He was a newcomer to circusdom; she had been there for five years, ever since her mother and father had left vaudeville, after the birth of Bobby, and gone to their death with the circus. Bert felt himself an orphan now, and she in reality was an orphan.

As he went into the pad-room that night preparatory to going out for his trapeze act with Ben, he saw Mary talking earnestly with Harry Carroll, one of the riders. Carroll was a fine-looking young chap, and Bert felt a distinct dislike to him mounting in his breast. It was strange, he thought, that Mary could have Carroll around her if he had to be denied that pleasure. What difference was there between Carroll and himself? Did Carroll have any more right than he?"

He remembered that Carroll had been much with Mary the last few days. Bert had seen him several times walking with her from the lot to the train, and once they had stopped by a restaurant and taken supper together. Bert had waited at the train, walking disconsolately up and down the track until they appeared. When he saw them coming down the lot, Harry carrying a parcel with which she had started out, and walking very close to her, he swore softly under his breath. It was the first time he had deliberately uttered an oath. As he lay down in his berth, he wondered what was coming over him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next day and for several days after Bert avoided Mary. He noticed that occasionally she looked at him as if wanting to say something to him, but he gave her no chance. He grew grouchy and peevish. "What're you always crowdin' off by yourself for?" Ben Hudson asked him. "You ain't gettin' tired of the show are you?"

"No. I'm learnin' what the show is," Bert replied. His secret he kept to himself.

Mary Valerno pretended she didn't notice, but occasionally she would go out of her way to do little things for Bert. Once she brought him a tie-rack for his berth, and again she bought some towels and hemstitched them for him so he wouldn't have to use the roller towel in the sleeper. With an effort Bert conquered his timidity, and their relations came back to something near the old friendliness. "I simply mustn't let myself fall in love with this girl," he would say to himself time and time again. "I've got to be the greatest performer in the business, and she'll be in the way—she'll hold me back."

A week later he was on his way to the cars, after the matinee performance, when Mary passed him in a hurry. "Wait for me and we'll walk down together," she shouted. Bert stopped and moved over to a stake wagon, where he seated himself on a wagon hub and watched her. She was going toward the treasurer's office, which was a big red wagon standing apart from the others. As she came near it, two men lounged up to her and one of them spoke. Bert started toward her on a run, as he saw her step back, but before he reached her side, the man made an attempt to put his arm around her. With a grin of joy Bert saw her slap the man full in the face and run into the treasurer's office.

The ruffian was swearing loudly when Bert got to him, and the other was urging him to go into the wagon after the girl. When she came out, Bert started off the lot with her, the men following, determined to pick a quarrel if possible. The two performers hurried on, but the men cut across the lot and came out in front of them as they turned into the path that ran the short distance to the train.

One of them, a huge fellow in overalls with a miner's cap stuck on the back of his head, laid a detaining hand on Bert's arm. He leered at the boy, his thick lips black with tobacco and turned back in a sneer.

"See here, young feller," he growled. "I got something to say to this girl."

Bert's face went white and then red. "Take your hands off me," he hissed.

Mary, in a half-frightened, half-defiant tone, was urging him away, but the big man pushed closer.

"Did you see what she did to me?" he roared. "She hit me. Now I'm going to make her kiss me for it."

Bert struck out with all the force in his arm and the big fellow dropped back, spitting blood and cursing. The other started forward, but saw Bert standing with a stone in his hand and fell back. Holding Mary by the arm Bert ran toward the cars, where two or three men, who had seen the occurrence, had started toward them.

"This ain't the end," shouted the man who was struck by Bert. "You think you're getting away, but that gal's got to beg my pardon before this show gets out of town, or there'll be somebody tellin' Bill Rawley why."

They turned and went back into the crowd, and Bert and Mary walked more slowly toward the train.

"You must be careful of yourself tonight," she told him before they parted at the car door. "They'll be watching for you."

"Oh, I guess not," Bert laughed. "They were just a couple of bullies. They won't dare to come around tonight."

"They'll start a hey-rube if they can, and you mark my word," said Mary. "This is a tough town. I've showed it before. All the men around here are miners and when they get full of cheap whisky, they come to the show looking for trouble."

"They'll find it all right if they get this crowd started," laughed Bert, and he went into his sleeper.

But that night he found Mary waiting for him near the dressing tent entrance as he finished changing his clothes.

"I told you so," she gasped. "That big fellow is out there with his gang. I don't know how many there are of them."

Bert went to the door and looked out. There on the lot, standing in the space that had been occupied by the sideshow, stood a crowd of perhaps fifty men, huge, dirty, intoxicated, talking and laughing loudly.

"We'll slip out under the side wall," suggested Bert when he got back to where she was standing, a little pale but not trembling. "I don't think they'll see us."

Quietly they lifted the wall and stepped out. As they did so, a heavy hand fell on Bert's shoulder, and he looked up into the leering face of the big man he had seen standing but a moment before in front of the dressing tent.

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UP TO DATE.

Maude Muller, on a summer's day,
Raked the meadows sweet with hay.
And as she raked, in the early morn,
She heard the honk of a Claxton horn.
Anon there drifted on the scene
A car, propelled by gasoline.
The Judge rode up in his motor car
And said to Maude: "Ah, there you are!"
He killed his engine, in the shade
Of the apple tree to chin the maid.
He spoke of the mileage of his tires,
As is the way of all good liars.
He said his car was quite the best
And had the edge on all the rest.
He invited Maude to take a ride,
And, nothing loath, she jumped inside.
The Judge from a purling brooklet drank,
And forthwith started in to crank.
He cranked and cranked till his arm was sore,
Then started in and cranked some more.
He cranked and cranked till he reeked with sweat,
And cranked till after the sun had set.
He cranked away with a right good will,
And the chances are he is cranking still.
And of all devices with which we're cursed,
The auto crank is about the worst.

* * *

Charms.

If you take a candle, go alone in a dark room at midnight and eat an apple before a looking-glass, the face of your future husband will appear over your shoulder and you can see his reflection in the glass. So they say.

Another way to get a view of your husband or wife-to-be is to go to bed on Halloween with a glass of water, in which a small sliver of wood has been placed, standing on your table by your bedside. In the night you will dream of falling from a bridge into a river, and of being rescued by your future husband, whom you will see as distinctly as though viewed with waking eyes.

Or, wet a shirt sleeve, hang it up to the fire to dry and lie in bed watching it till midnight when the apparition of your future life partner will come in and turn the sleeve.

An up-to-date Halloween test is to hang up ribbons representing the various colleges. The girls are blindfolded and each picks out a ribbon, the colors of which will indicate the alma mater of the husband-to-be. This trick could be carried out with cards painted in water colors with the various college colors or names.

Children born on Halloween are said to be able to see and converse with fairies, witches and other supernatural beings. Sir Walter Scott makes use of this idea in "The Monastery."

If on this evening you shake hands with a very blond man you will have a proposal—but not necessarily from the blond—before the bells shall have rung in the new year.

If your lover should, under the potency of the magic evening, propose marriage on this night, let him bind you at once by tying a blue ribbon upon your wedding ring finger that both he and you may be true. It might be well when dressing for the evening to see that you have somewhere about your person the requisite bit of ribbon.

Just at midnight—and you must by no means retire before that magic hour on the 31st of October—listen for the sound of bells from the nearest church steeple (if there are none in your neighborhood you can't do this). Should you hear a full and distinct peal, begin on your trosseau; but if there be a dull and muffled sound, possess your soul in patience for another year.

By the way, have you a four-leaved clover? It doesn't matter if it be a dried or pressed one. Put it in your shoe on the morning of the 31st and wear it until you retire at night. It will bring you good luck through the following year.

* * *

Halloween Tests.

From a festival once surrounded by elaborate ancient rites and sacred observances, Halloween has popularly come to mean a time when the small boy indulges in innumerable mad and merry pranks, from tying up the doorknob to bobbing for apples, and when bachelors and maids test all the magic rites and mystic symbols of this momentous night to discover what their fate will be.

It is the night when fairies dance, witches ride and ghosts walk, strange dreams foretell prosperity or adversity, and when lovers' dreams and divination are most potent. Even in this erudite and advanced twentieth century the same omens and tokens of the Halloween of yore are tested and the very up-to-date young college woman is quite ready with the rest to fling aside dignity and learning and play at all the familiar tricks and charms and feel again little primeval thrills of terror course up and down her back as the hour grows ghostly.

On Halloween, nuts and apples are, and have always been, popular means for telling fortunes. In early English days nuts were used so much that the 31st of October was dubbed "Nut-crack night." Bobby Burns in his poem of Halloween tells how

The auld guid-wife's well-hoordit nits
  Are round and round divided,
And mony lads' and lasses' fates
  Are there that night decided.
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
  And burn thegither trimly
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
  And jump out owre the chimly,
    Fu' high that night.

The charm referred to is one of the oldest of the spells, "tried and true," for testing the constancy of one's sweetheart. Two nuts are placed about three inches apart on the bars of the grate or on the stove, one being for the fair questioner, the other for her sweetheart. If his jump or crack, he is fickle, but if both nuts cuddle up to each other and burn brightly, side by side, the man and maid will marry and be happy ever after.

Sometimes three nuts are used, one representing the girl, the others two rival suitors. The nut which burns longer and more quietly betokens the more constant lover.

* * *

HALLOWEEN.

As I was walking down the street
What on earth should I chance to meet,
But a pumpkin, dressed like a living being,
The funniest thing I had ever seen.

His nose was cut like the letter "V,"
His eyes were cut the same, you see
His gown was made of green and red,
And fastened onto his pumpkin head.

I stared at him and he stared at me,
His eyes were as hollow as they could be,
And all at once I heard a groan
That surely would melt a heart of stone.

My blood ran cold and my tongue was still,
'Till the creature passed o'er a distant hill;
Then home I ran, like a bird on wing,
I shall never forget that awful thing.

As Halloween is drawing near,
I just imagine I can hear
That awful groan that I heard before,
I will never go to the kitchen door.

For some of the ghosts abroad tonight
May be there to give me another fright.
I don't believe in such fun, you see,
Especially when the joke's on me.

* * *

Proving It.

"Libel, indeed!"

Old Miggs repeated the words to himself dully and uncomprehendingly, as he tramped along to the court, where he was to appear as witness in a local libel case.

Nervously he entered the witness box.

The fierce-looking lawyer eyed him calculatingly.

"Do you swear," he asked, "that this is not your handwriting?"

"I don't think so," stammered Miggs.

'Now, be careful," insinuated the lawyer. "Are you prepared to swear that this handwriting does not resemble yours?"

"Yes," asserted Miggs, trembling.

"You take your oath that this does not in any way resemble your handwriting?" solemnly queried the learned man.

"Yes, sir," stammered the witness, now thoroughly frightened.

"Well, then, prove it!" denounced the lawyer, triumphantly, as he thrust his head toward the witness.

This action woke the last spark of drooping courage in poor Miggs, and, thrusting forth his head, he yelled:

"'Cos I can't write!"

* * *

Just as Well.

Efficiency was the topic that was being discussed at a gabfest in a Washington club the other night, when Congressman John G. Rothermel of Reading was reminded of the declaration of a party named James.

The aforesaid James attended a circus some time since, where one of the big features of the show was a beautiful lion tamer. Entering the ring, followed by the lion, the fair charmer placed a lump of sugar between her pretty lips, which the lion took from her with his teeth. Instantly James sat upright and began to take notice.

"Great stunt, all right," he loudly shouted to the performer, "but I can do it, too!"

"Of course," scornfully replied the girl, who didn't appreciate having her act minimized, "but do you really think you can?"

"Most assuredly," was the prompt rejoinder of James, "just as well as the lion."

* * *

Not at All Slow.

At breakfast restless little Tommy began to play with the cruet stand. His father told him not to do so. Tommy persisted and at last upset it and spilled the pepper on the tablecloth.

"Now, Tommy," said his father, "you were disobedient and upset the pepper caster, and I really ought to make the punishment fit the crime by putting some of the pepper on your tongue."

Tommy looked up in a flash and said: "Should I be punished in the same way, dad, if I upset the sugar bowl?"

* * *

Listed.

In the census office at Washington acts against the law are recorded under a few main heads, such as murder, burglary, etc. A lady who was working there recently ran across the crime, "Running a blind tiger." After a puzzled moment she placed it under the list, "Cruelty to Animals."

THE DAY AFTER.

Take the cow from out the steeple,
  Off the chimney bring the gate;
We're a serious-minded people—
  When we have to pay the freight.

Pranks and antics we deemed funny
  While in Halloween immersed
Tragic seem as squandered money,
  On this dear November First.

Fetch the goat down from the attic,
  We've been mad and bad and glad;
We rejoiced to be erratic—
  Now we're safe and sane and sad!

* * *

Probably Right.

They were discussing the North American Indian in a rural school, says a British weekly, when the teacher asked if any one could tell him what the leaders of the tribes were called.

"Chief," answered a bright little girl, at the head of the class.

"Correct," answered the teacher. "Now can any of you tell me what the women are called?"

There was a silence for a minute or two, and then a small boy's hand waved eagerly aloft.

"Well, Frankie?" asked the teacher.

"Mischief," he proudly announced.

* * *

He Knew.

"Now boys," said the schoolmaster, "I want you to bear in mind that the word 'stan' at the end of a word means 'the place of.' Thus we have Afghanistan—the place of Afghans; also Hindustan—the place of the Hindus. Can any one give another example?"

Nobody appeared very anxious to do so, until little Johnny Snaggs, the joy of his mother and the terror of the cats, said proudly:

"Yes, sir, I can. Umbrellastan—the place for umbrellas."

* * *

All There.

A school teacher complained to the principal the other day that one of the big boys was flirting outrageously with the music teacher, who came in once a day. The principal spoke severely to the class and ended by saying that, out of consideration for the feelings of the culprit, he would not name him in public. At the close of the session, however, he was to come to the principal's office for an interview.

Yes, you guessed it. All the boys in the class showed up.

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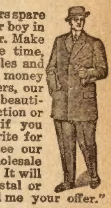

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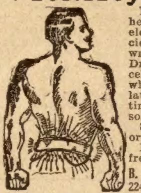

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A neat and compact little cabinet into which 100 feet of strong line is wound. Protects the line from dust and dirt, keeps it free from knots and tangles and out of the way when not in use. Always in place—always ready for instant use. Only a few seconds necessary to withdraw the line or wind it up. Needed in every kitchen, bathroom, laundry and back porch.

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THE FAIRY CORNER

KATE MADE A PIE.

This is the pie that Kate made!
These are the apples so ripe and red,
Cut into quarters and put to bed,
In the wonderful pie that Kate made.
This is the crust so soft and light,
Put in the oven and baked just right,
That covered the apples so ripe and red,
Cut into quarters and put to bed
In the wonderful pie that Kate made.
And these are the hungry girls and boys,
Fond of laughter and fun and noise,
Who ate up the crust so soft and light,
Put in the oven and baked just right,
That covered the apples so ripe and red,
Cut into quarters and put to bed
In the wonderful pie that Kate made.

◆

A PET TIGER.

Instead of a pet kitten, how should you like to have a little tiger cub for a pet?

A woman living in India once received as a present a baby tiger. It was like a baby kitten, only larger, and its eyes were not yet open, for it was one of a litter of tiger cubs taken away from their mother by a hunter.

The mother tigress lived in the hills of Berar, where tigers are not dangerous. They kill and eat wild game, but seldom injure cattle, and never attack men. But after her cubs were taken from her this tigress grew so savage and fierce in her misery that she terrified the natives. They dared not leave the village, except in parties, and never entered the lonely jungle until the tigress had left the neighborhood.

The little cub, its new mistress feared, would die, until she had the happy thought of feeding it with goat's milk. You have probably seen calves or kittens taking the milk from their mothers. The tiger cub took hers from a goat, and she grew and thrived. Her mistress named her Juno. When she was two months old she was about the size of a dachshund, and a good deal the same shape, except that her head and paws were large and clumsy.

Juno was as playful and friendly as a kitten, rolling over and over and romping about the floors, trying to play with everybody that came to the house. She was always perfectly gentle.

As she grew older, her gambols were, of course, rather rougher, and the swish of her big tail was not good for the furniture and ornaments. Some of the visitors to the house began to be afraid of her, and so Juno was generally kept in a shed on the compound, which is a large yard with a wall around it. There she was tied with a long chain which gave her plenty of room to run and play.

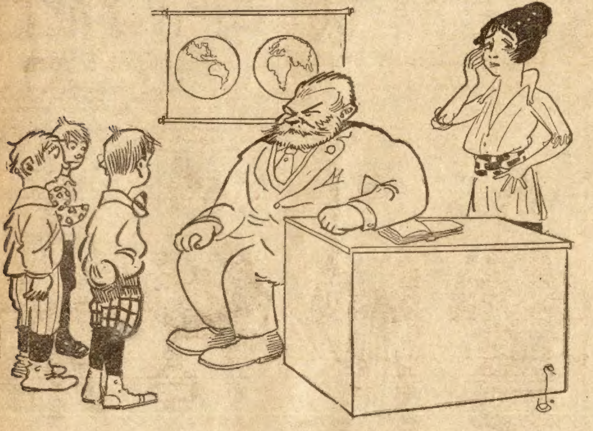
When she was about a year old she measured over seven feet long and was strong and heavy, but people who visited her found her just as playful and friendly as ever.

It was a queer thing that, although most tigers of that age live entirely on raw meat, Juno could not be happy without her milk twice every day from her foster-mother, the goat. How strange it must have looked to see a big tigress nursed by a little goat!

Another of Juno's friends was a little fox terrier. He was not a bit afraid of her. She would seize him in her great paws and roll on the ground, biting him all over without hurting him, and the little dog bit her nose and pulled her long whiskers with all his little might. Juno was never more gentle than when at play. She was no bully, but seemed to like one of the fine, big dogs that never hurt the smaller ones. Of course, if she was fond of you and if you happened to have on a coat or dress made of thin stuffs, such as they wear in India, it was apt to be torn by the tips of her claws.

Juno loved her mistress so dearly that sometimes she would hold her tight, and it was hard to coax her to let go. When her mistress finally got free, the tiger would tug at her chain and whine after her until she was out of sight.

At last Juno was sold to a dealer in wild animals, and he took her away. He promised to write and tell her mistress how she was getting along, but he never did. Perhaps she is traveling around the world with a circus or with the trained wild animals that some of us have seen. It would be easy to teach her tricks, as she had known only love and kindness all her early life.



The Visitor—"Now, then, Willie—who was Joan of Arc?"
Willie—"Please, sir, Noah's wife."

◆

An English Princess.

The Princess Mary, daughter of the King of England, recently celebrated her eighteenth birthday, and now she is to be accorded a few more privileges than she has had heretofore. She may wear more jewelry, for instance, and her father and mother gave her a necklace of pearls for her birthday, the first she has ever possessed. There were numerous other gifts of jewelry from her royal cousins, all simple in style, to accord with the Queen's well-known wishes in regard to her daughter's dress.

It isn't very long ago that the Princess was given her own suite of apartments, and one of her birhtday gifts was a delicate set of china, which she uses for serving tea in her room when her girl friends visit her. The Princess has made her rooms a treasure house for her belongings, especially for her photographs. These include the portraits of famous aviators, for whom the Princess has a great admiration. There is a story that she wished to show favor to an airman, a friend of her brother's, so she sent him a box of cake anonymously, forgetting that the paper in which it was wrapped was engraved "Windsor Castle."

It is said that the Princess is beginning to feel "grown up" and to resent the supervision of her ladies-in-waiting. She is high-spirited, energetic, and a thoroughly "nice" girl—so they say. Poor lady, she will have to endure the misfortunes of royalty. Let us hope there will be sufficient compensation for them. The Princess Mary is an excellent horsewoman.

◆

Pets in China.

The Chinese children are very fond of pets and are universally kind to them. Birds of various kinds are kept as pets and it is a common sight to see fine-looking, elegant gentlemen taking their birds out for an airing either in cages or perched upon the fingers of their masters. These gentlemen will go to the greatest trouble to catch insects with which to feed them. No family of any position would think of leaving their pets in the city during the hot weather. They accompany the family to the mountains, every one of them, down to the tiniest cricket.

Crows are regarded with much favor in China. They are taught cunning tricks and show a great deal of intelligence. Pigeons have bamboo whistles fastened to their feathers so they make mysterious noises as they fly. Cats are taught to live in birdhouses to protect the birds from rats.

What seems the queerest pet to us is the cricket. This insect belongs to boys, although many grownups keep them as well. They are carefully fed, provided with water and kept in pretty bamboo cages. The ladies like them for their cheerful chirps, and it is not pleasant to tell that the boys and men keep them for fighting.

Cricket fights take place in tubs. The insects when victorious in several fights are regarded with great honor. They have special names, and when at last they die they are buried with solemn rites in coffins of solid silver.

◆

HEY, DIDDLE, DIDDLE.

The man in the moon
  Rubbed open his eyes,
And gazed about
  With great surprise.
Pray what do you think was the matter?
  Why, fathoms below,
  On the beautiful snow,
The spoon ran away with the platter.

Then music he heard,
  So tender and sweet
The lovely performer
  He was eager to meet.
The words of her song were: "Hey, diddle,
    diddle!"
  He saw a fine sight,
  For, standing upright,
The cat sang this song to the fiddle.

Then over his head
  Came flying a cow
He took off his hat
  And made her a bow.
But not for a moment could poor mooley
    stay,
  But jumped to the earth,
  Where all knew her worth,
And rested well after her play.

Now all these queer doings
  Saw the dog and the owl.
The owl he kept quiet;
  The dog gave a howl.
Then throwing his head back, he bow-
    wowed and laughed,
  For never before,
  He felt very sure,
Did any dog see such witchcraft.

◆

Business Card.

A Chinese who had observed the business fashions in America returned to his village house and set up a dairy. His equipment consisted of two English cows and some cards for distribution which read as follows:

GENERAL SUNG KEE DAIRY FARM.

We open at Moo-Sung—for sale the foreign milk, the taste are sweet, the milk are pure and the prices are just. We haven't put any water in it, if examine out, won't pay a single cash.

◆

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$50 to $100 a Week
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Your Suit FREE
Don't wait. Don't delay. Write right away. A postal will do. We send everything the day your request is received. We pay express on everything. Get busy. Simply send us a postal with your name and address on it.
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CURED HIS RUPTURE
I was badly ruptured while lifting a trunk several years ago. Doctors said my only hope of cure was an operation. Trusses did me no good. Finally I got hold of something that quickly and completely cured me. Years have passed and the rupture has never returned, although I am doing hard work as a carpenter. There was no operation, no lost time, no trouble. I have nothing to sell, but will give full information about how you may find a complete cure without operation, if you write to me, Eugene M. Pullen, Carpenter, 399 A Marcellus Avenue, Manasquan, N. J. Better cut out this notice and show it to any others who are ruptured—you may save a life or at least stop the misery of rupture and the worry and danger of an operation.

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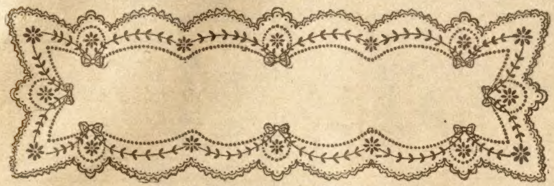
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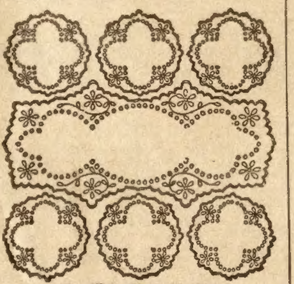
NO. 17 P. B., LINEN DRESSER SCARF.—The pretty scarf illustrated here was made especially for us, and we believe that any woman will be proud of having such a beautiful piece on her dresser. We will send you this beautiful scarf stamped on white Irish linen, size 18x54 inches, for a $1.00, new or renewal, subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.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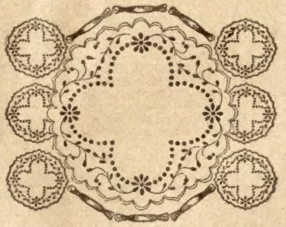
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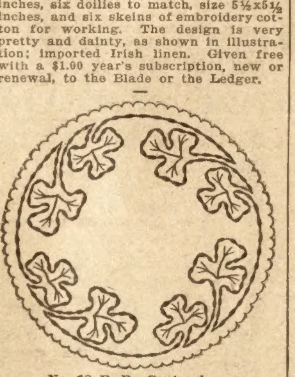
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NO. 18 P. B., CENTERPIECE.—Here is one of the best offers we have ever been able to make! Think of it, a beautiful 18-inch centerpiece, stamped on real white Irish linen, including enough coronation cord and cotton to embroider the design. Given free with a $1.00 subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade or the Ledger.

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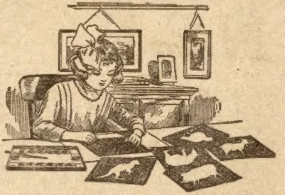

No. 19 P. B., Animal Stencil Outfit.

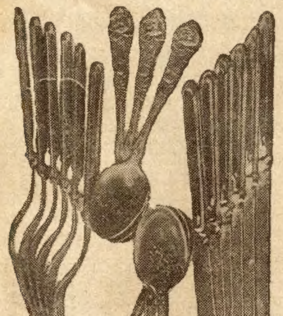
* * *

A Severe Case.

Marcella—"Mr. Beanbrough seems to be greatly bothered with indigestion."

Waverly—"I should say so! He refused to attend a moving-picture show the other evening because one of the scenes had a banquet in it."

FREE! Set of Silverware!



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Consists of one-half dozen each knives, forks and spoons of the new nickel silver plate made by a new process—will not tarnish or show scratches; knives—best hoop steel—can be sharpened. Are full size and will last a life time, made in the standard attractive design—fit for the finest table use but can stand the wear of every day service.

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With a subscription to the Blade and Ledger for one year, which is $2.00, we will give half of this table set, that is, three (3) knives, three (3) forks and three (3) spoons. Send us $2.00 for one year's subscription to the Blade and Ledger and we will send you the three knives, three forks and three spoons free of all charges.

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Face Paint Tabooed; Remove Skin Instead

"A few years ago only one class of women painted their faces," says Dolly Madison in Chicago News. "It was a sign of social ostracism and was tabooed in refined circles. The custom has become so universal we must admit it is to be deplored and to be shelved as soon as possible."

How foolish to seek artificial "beauty" of this sort, obnoxious from artistic and moral standpoints, when it is so easy to obtain a truly natural complexion by the use of ordinary mercolized wax, which may be had at any drug store in original one-ounce package. This mercolized wax is so effective, harmless and inexpensive, no one need think of using anything else for the purpose. Applied like cold cream at night, and washed off in the morning, it at once begins to show its remarkable rejuvenating effects. It gently absorbs the life ess surface skin in tiny particles, gradually showing the fresher, livelier, beautiful underskin. Naturally it takes with it all surface defects, like freckles, pimples, moth patches and liver spots.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

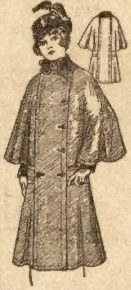
Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

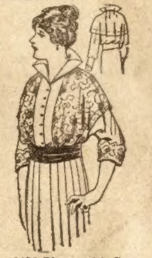
PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

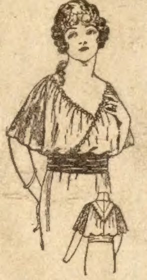
Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

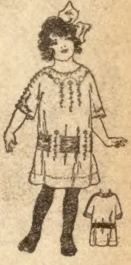
The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

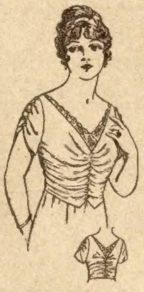
We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. **Read our splendid offer below.**

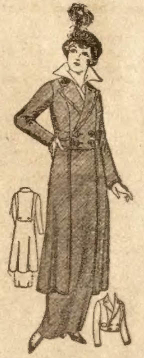

8445 Cape Coat for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.

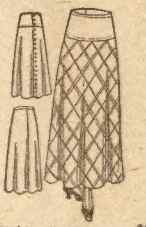

8439 Blouse with Cape Effect, 34 to 42 bust.

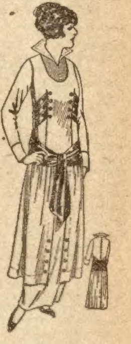

8432 Fancy Blouse for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.


8434 Child's One-Piece Dress, 2 to 6 years.


8427 Shirred Evening Basque, 34 to 42 bust.


8438 Double-Breasted Coat, 34 to 44 bust.


8441A Circular Skirt, 24 to 34 waist.


8443 Basque with Gathered Tunic, 34 to 42 bust.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

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To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

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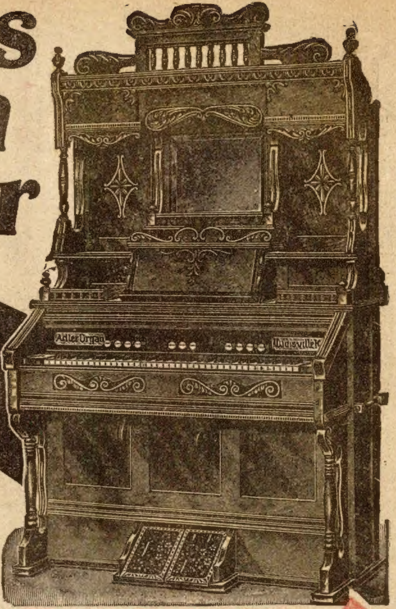

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You've heard lots of Piano and Organ talk and have doubtless had all kinds of propositions put up to you—but here is the fairest, squarest, most liberal offer ever thought out by any organ maker. Read it! I am the man who made the *"Adler"* a household word; more than 90,000 of these famous instruments are now in the homes of the people—and when I say there's nothing to pay for but quality when you buy one of my *World Famed Adler Organs—Winners of the highest prize at St. Louis World's Fair—also winners of Gold Medal at National Conservation, Knoxville, Tenn., 1913*—it means a whole lot to you—to your pocket book—in long years of continued service and the satisfaction of the sweetest music ever heard by human ears. It means Rock Bottom prices.

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I can and will save you $48.75 because I sell direct from the $1,000,000 Adler Organ Factory (greatest in existence) at lowest wholesale factory prices. The Adler Plan thoroughly wrecks organ prices, absolutely sponging out *all* "in-between," extra, middlemen's profits you pay on other organs.

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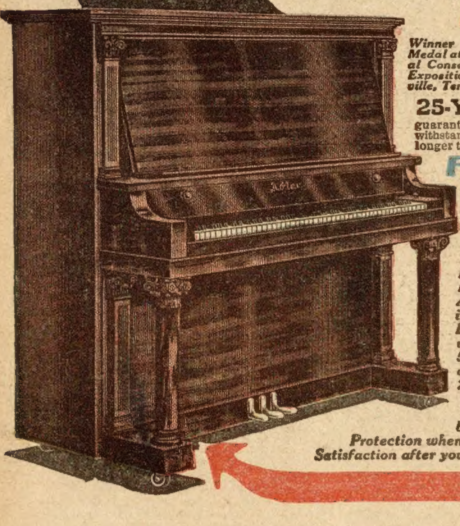

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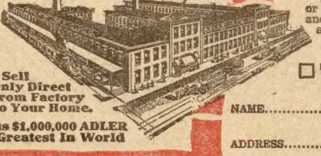

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